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BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.

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RECOLLECTIONS OF THE EMPRESS EUGÉNIE.

BY ETHEL SMYTH, MUS. DOC.

I.

Strange that the death of a woman of ninety-five should seem to those who knew her well the one incredible thing. Yet this, I am certain, was the feeling with which, on the 12th July, hundreds of people read the news that the Empress Eugénie's long life had come to a close. There seemed no reason why she should not live on indefinitely — nor any for wishing it might be otherwise, since the one shadow that darkened her later years (though she herself never believed it could not be dissipated), the dread of total blindness, had passed away.

There are two conditions, I think, which determine fitness to survive: your own interest in life must be unimpaired, and further, you must possess the certainty that your company is still eagerly desired by your friends. Such was more emphatically the Empress's case, surely, than that of other mortals who have reached so great an age. One felt convinced, too, that as she had been, so she would be to the end; that there would be no gradual failing—no sad period of death in life, which is the fate one most dreads for the old.

And so it turned out. Well in health, back in Spain again, after years of absence, and among her own people; her sight painlessly and, as it seemed, miraculously restored; congratulating herself on having faced an operation that if painless was formidable, glorying in the fact that it was a Spanish doctor who invented the method . . . behold her one

day walking in her nephew's garden, discussing the details of her imminent return to England,—and the next, after a few hours of pain and distress, sinking gently into death. As one who loved and was beloved by her has told me, "her heart gradually ceased to beat . . . as it might be a little bird that dies in your hand."

Such was her end; and who shall say it was not the happiest one could wish for her?

In the following pages no attempt will be made to speak of the Empress as historical personage; unless incidentally, when recording things she said that struck one so much at the time, that they found their way into private letters, or into a diary which, alas! was only started in 1917. This is merely a record written by one who saw her constantly, travelled with her, stayed in her houses, lived practically next door to her for more than thirty years, and who eagerly sought her company because, quite apart from her story, she was one of the most interesting, original, remarkable and delightful people in the world.

In order to show what my claims may be to speak, I will say, briefly, how I came to know her.

When she came to live at Farnborough Hill after the Prince Imperial's death, my parents were among the neighbours occasionally invited to tea or dinner; and my mother's French upbringing, which included an easy command of the language, was a point in her favour in a house where no one but its mistress had any English. In those days the Empress had more or less of a Household: the old Duc de Bassano; Madame le Breton — once *Lectrice*, now *Dame d'Honneur*, sole companion of the flight to England in 1870; and Monsieur Pietri, the Empress's secretary, who was one of the few people connected with her in the old days of whose deep personal devotion there could be no doubt. And besides one or two daughters of ancient officials of the Imperial Court, who occasionally took a spell of honorary service, there were later attempts at a resident *Demoiselle d'Honneur*. But these were not successes, as will be recounted in due course, and the idea was soon abandoned; particularly as the Empress went nowhere, except on occasional visits to Queen Victoria, and at such times was attended by Madame Arcos, who was a *persona grata* at Court.

The first time I saw Her Majesty was in the year 1883 —the time when, as I have related elsewhere,[1] the Duchesse de Mouchy remarked that in a certain sense she was even more beautiful now than in her youth; and certainly that beauty surpassed one's extremest expectations. Not more than 5 feet 5 inches, I fancy, the perfection of her

[1] 'Impressions that Remained.' (Longmans.)

proportions gave the idea of a far taller woman, and any one interested in motion must at once have been struck by her walk. Less like walking than gliding, it was the easiest, most graceful style of progression imaginable. The face was very pale, and, except as to the eyebrows, not in the least made up (no powder, no rouge); and under the large hat you caught sight of her hair—grey, inclining to white. It was not till some years later that I saw her bare-headed, but to the end she never changed her *coiffure*. She detested caps and never wore them; and, as the years went on, the flat curls and other additions she permitted herself, faithfully turned white, with her own strong, plentiful hair. I always thought the whole head-arrangement a triumph of genius—absolutely suitable to her age, yet not hiding the shape of that exquisitely poised little head.

The occasion I am speaking of, when I first came into personal contact with her, was a meet of the harriers, which took place, at her special request, at Farnborough Hill. She came out on to the gravel sweep in front of the house, and her manner was more gracious and winning than any manner I had ever seen, as she bowed right and left to the awestruck field, saying repeatedly, "Put on your 'ats; I pray you, put on your 'ats." The Master was then presented, and she really and truly did remark to him—as, if you come to think of it, she naturally would—"I 'ope the 'ounds will find the 'are near the 'ouse,"—all of which was my first intimation of a fact which surprised me in later years, her lack of gift for languages; for well I knew that her education had included a prolonged sojourn at a boarding-school at Clifton.

In due course I and my sisters were presented, and instantly were lifted into the seventh heaven by the warmth of our reception, for even then she had the delight in young people that became such a marked characteristic in after years. A little later my mother was bidden to tea, and thus began the relation that was one of the great joys and burning interests of my life up to the day of her death.

One more instance, before I leave the subject, of her peculiar English of that epoch (for as time went on, though it was never very good, there was considerable improvement). She was driving me back to our home, Frimhurst, one day, the entrance to which was extremely awkward. Her coachman not being the soberest of men, one of the hind wheels caught the gate-post, and an accident was narrowly avoided. Pulling up, he explained that the 'orses were pulling very 'ard. The Empress's angry rejoinder was: "It's not the 'orses that are pulling 'ard, it's you that always forget the be'ind of the carriage."

In connection with the boarding-school I spoke of,

one of those little incidents occurred that beget reflections on the wide subject called "human nature." A rather creditable Smyth relation of ours, who had figured in her youth in the "Book of Beauty," and who once told me that her mouth was considered an exact reproduction of Cupid's bow, had known Mademoiselle de Montijo in those Clifton days; indeed, the family had been asked to be kind to this young Spanish girl of partly Scotch descent. Naturally we imagined that the fact would be a passport to the good graces of the Empress; but she seemed to have no recollection of my cousin's existence, and we suddenly felt that this was not a subject to pursue.

In after-life I noticed that she would talk freely about the impecunious days of her childhood in Spain—how, from motives of economy, she and her sister were not allowed to wear stockings; how they would gallop twenty miles across country on rough, unshod horses, in order to have a good meal, for once and a way, at the house of a high-born and wealthy relation, and so on. This picturesque Spanish penuriousness evidently appealed to her imagination; not so the dingy boarding-school era, which seemed to be forgotten! I can only recall her alluding to it once, namely, when she told us that her life had been made a burden to her "at school" because of the colour of her hair—that wonderful golden-red, that a few years later all the hairdressers in Europe were endeavouring to reproduce on the heads of their clients! Boarding-schools were not patronised by the aristocracy in those days, and I was never to learn anything about a bit of her life which would have interested me quite particularly.

In the same way, though less of a snob in the depths of her soul than any one it is possible to conceive, she obviously gloried in the illustriousness of her Spanish descent, was horrified if any of her relations contemplated what she considered a *mésalliance*, and rather implacable if the marriage came off. And though she was proud, theoretically, of her Scotch blood, I came to the conclusion that certain genealogical investigations had not yielded a wholly satisfactory result, and that here again was a point upon which it was not tactful to cross-question her.

During the years that followed that first vision of her at the meet of the harriers, I personally saw little of her, being either in Germany or Italy for a great part of the year; and it was not till 1890, when, all my sisters being married, I took up my abode at Frimhurst, that I came to know her well. By way of illustrating the human, understanding side of the Empress, perhaps I may be permitted a glance into our home life.

I have told elsewhere how,

shortly before my mother's death, overcome by the tedium of life in the country, she was seized with a sudden desire to live in London, and how this prospect appalled my father and me. "Il faut tâcher de la distraire, de l'égayer un peu," said the Empress, and she at once began planning a dinner party for the following week to which my mother was to be invited, begging me to find out from her whom she would like to meet. And on the day when her last illness fell upon her, my mother had been discussing the matter with delight.

Shortly after her death I paid my first visit to Cap Martin, where the Empress was already meditating the building of her villa, "Cyrnos"; and afterwards I accompanied her, as a sort of honorary *Demoiselle d'Honneur*, on a yachting trip down the east coast of the Adriatic. It was then, during two months of close intimacy, that I formed an impression of her character—an impression conceived in a first whirl of affection and admiration, but which the succeeding years only served to deepen. "Whatever may be her faults," I wrote home, "they are faults of a noble character, and one wonders how her worst enemies can ever have attributed littleness to her. Her judgments of people, including these, are so temperate, so free from bitterness, so generous and merciful, that one feels ashamed of one's own acrimony and harshness." It is worth while saying this here, because many are under the impression that certain of her qualities were only acquired in old age. But in 1891 she was a great deal nearer to "les événements," as she always called the downfall of the Second Empire, than in 1918—the last date at which I came upon some remarks to this purpose, coupled with truisms concerning the mitigating effects of time upon character.

I remember noticing at Venice one convenient result of that gliding walk of hers. Some *festa* was going on: night after night the *Piazza* was thronged, and she always loved wandering unknown in a crowd. But if you lost her it was easy to find her again, for though there were scores of *tussore* parasols lined with green, none moved among the packed heads as did hers—without jerk or oscillation.

It was at Venice that I discovered that she had not a drop of artistic blood in her veins. It was amusing, and at the same time embarrassing, to look at pictures in her company, so anxious was she to believe and prove that she was enjoying them, so obviously was she at sea; also secretly bored to death, as are all people who have practical interests they thoroughly understand, and find themselves condemned to flutter ignorantly round things the meaning of which escapes them. Confronted by a fine portrait, her comments were of the order of those you may overhear at an Exhibition of the Royal Academy: "Isn't that the image of Aunt Jane?" But

if it were the case of an historical picture, the battle of Lepanto for instance, you could listen to her by the hour, such was her memory, her grasp of the interests at stake, and of what would have happened had the issue been the other way. It was this quality of hers, her knowledge of history, her perception of the general lie of events, that so profoundly impressed my friend, Mr Wickham Steed, when he went with me to see her just after the Armistice was signed, and talked with her for five hours on end. "There is not a soul alive," he said, "who has this precise knowledge of what the war is about, and what led to it. It is like talking with a dozen dead-and-gone statesmen—with the very Incarnation of History!"

The yachting party consisted of four persons only, the other two being Count Joseph Primoli and M. Pietri, and at Corfu I learned to know her passionate love of justice. We arrived in the midst of one of the periodical disturbances between Jews and Christians—including a revival of the old charge of massacring a Christian child in honour of the Passover—and the Empress, greatly to the alarm of the local authorities, marched ostentatiously through the Ghetto, and insisted on presenting the Chief Rabbi with a large sum of money for the outcasts.

Wherever we went, the Empress being meticulous as to outside observances, the Church was visited, and the whole population would follow in her train. This used to annoy her considerably, for she had had enough of that sort of thing in the past, and now cherished the unrealisable hope of preserving her *incognita*. Besides which, publicity involved large donations, and though she was a generous giver, she objected to her purse being prized open like an oyster.

On one occasion a supremely ridiculous incident happened, and to give point to it I must explain that she had a physical horror of relics which no sense of their sanctity had power to counteract. One can imagine her consternation, therefore, when we were informed, on landing at Trau, that a ceremony had been arranged at the Cathedral in her honour, in which the shin-bone of the founder was to play a part. There was no escape, the church was filled to bursting, and as she knelt at the altar-rails, the organist meanwhile playing a thunderous valse-tune, the relic was not only produced, but as an unheard-of favour presented to her to kiss. I watched the whole scene from the background where I had modestly placed myself, fearing, as a Protestant, to defile the bone; but the priest, informed by the mischief-loving Count Primoli that I also was of the Imperial party, made a kindly yet authoritative signal. And no sooner had I pressed my lips to the relic, than a bell was rung, and the valse broke off abruptly in the middle of a bar—which

is an exceedingly difficult feat to accomplish.

I have many vignette-memories of that entrancing voyage: the journey from Trieste to join the yacht at Corfu in a huge liner, empty but for a crowd of Mussulmans on their way to Mecca, who walked about with large, long loaves of bread under their arms in the daytime, and used them as pillows at night; I see Primoli, who was mad on photography, snapshotting the pilgrims, and the Empress's terror lest they should murder us all in consequence; I see them draw aside their floating garments, in civil dread of contamination, as we moved amongst them; I see the whole party, including the servants, in the throes of sea-sickness, while the Empress, who did not know what it meant and gloried in rough weather, was divided between genuine sympathy for our sufferings, and that mixture of scorn, and evil triumphant delight which is the inevitable state of mind of the immune. . . . And here a vision of later years obtrudes itself: it is in the Mall of Cantire—surely the most horrible bit of water in the world—and I see her, lashed, chair and all, to the mast, needless to say with no company save that of the crew!

. . . . . .

From that time onwards the Empress became one of the two pivots of my life in England, and when my father died, in 1894, I took a little cottage about two miles from Farnborough Hill. If I mention that my public career as musician was just beginning, it is because I want to lay stress on the fact, that never had beginner a more wonderful friend to look to. She had always been keen on women's work, and told me how furious it had made her, during the Empire, when they decided that, inasmuch as women were not eligible as members of the Légion d'Honneur, that distinction was to be conferred upon Rosa Bonheur's *brother*, who, it appears, was a very middling painter! I now learned, too, that it was at the Empress's instigation that women were first employed in the French P.O., and how fierce the opposition had been.

Such being her views, it will be believed that all it was possible to do was done by her to help me. The expenses of printing some of my earliest compositions were borne by her; and in my interests she broke a rule, rigorously kept ever since "les événements," never again to appear in public, and attended the first (and only) performance of my Mass at the Albert Hall in 1893. . . . Alas! too soon she came to the conclusion that in some ways I was a bad horse to back—too uncompromising and bent on having things properly done, too averse to diplomacy and the use of soft sawder! . . . "Vous n'êtes donc jamais lasse de vous faire des ennemis!" she would say.

This, according to her own account, was not a matter she

herself had considered negligible. I remember her once relating how at Biarritz she had been at infinite pains to shower civilities upon an imposing gentleman whom she believed to be the editor of the 'Times,'—a journal that had been inimical to the Empire from the first—and how it gradually became manifest that the object of her amenities was not connected with the 'Times' at all, but owner of a racing stable! . . . I suppose sovereigns are obliged to do this sort of thing, but I wondered how such a conspicuously sincere, upright nature could thus stoop to conquer. It was, however, one of the peculiarities of her complex character, in spite of a sense of honour so delicate, that at times one felt as if all other nations were crawling worms compared to the Spaniards, she could not conceive why any reasonable being should shrink from opportunism in cases such as one's "career."

In the same way she would advise me to be specially civil to so and so, because he or she was very rich; and I must admit that, though she was pre-eminently the friend of the unfortunate, riches appealed to and impressed her. I remember saying in the case of a certain Dives, that, apart from his being a cad and antipathetic to me, I hated rich people. Whereupon she remarked with some violence, "Dieu, que c'est bête!"

It is chiefly on account of the Empress that I regret not having kept a diary till late in life, except during a brief period of three months. Outstanding events get into one's correspondence, and there is some chance of refreshing memory at this source later on. But as regards the sidelights thrown on history in the course of conversation with one who has played a leading part in it, nothing but a diary meets the case. At special moments, when some passing event brought sunken details of the past whirling to the surface, she would discuss the matter eagerly, illustrate it by her personal knowledge, go to a drawer, pull out papers, and prove her statements. Especially would this happen, of course, in connection with affairs in France; and one marvelled at her dignity and self-restraint in never using the terrible weapons that lay to her hand.

In those early days I used in my innocence to urge her to write her memoirs, and even maintained it was a duty. She said it never would be done by her—not from indifference, but mainly because the idea of reliving her past filled her with horror. And there were other reasons, too, for silence. "In such cases," she remarked, "one is surrounded by St Peters—people who in a moment of infidelity failed you, but later on in their remorse, did their best to atone—sometimes at heavy cost to themselves. Who could show up such penitents? Yet, if memoirs are not to be useless, it must be done"—which was unanswerable.

That day she spoke of the folly of supposing that they themselves, who had little to gain by success, and everything to lose by defeat, had pressed for war. As for the *rôle* of firebrand attributed to herself, she said she had not even been present at the councils of that period, the Emperor having informed her, on her return from opening the Suez Canal, that M. Ollivier desired her attendance should be dispensed with, . . . "which," she remarked characteristically, "I found quite natural. Former Ministers had requested my presence, this one requested my absence. Why not?" She added, that so far were she and the Emperor from conviction that France would be victorious, and so convinced that in the opposite case they themselves would be driven from the Tuileries, that as soon as war was declared she made over the Crown Jewels to the Ministry on her own responsibility—*and got a receipt!*—"for I knew," she said, "that if it came to a revolution, I should be accused of having stolen them."

As the Emperor was very ill at the time, and in constant pain, he may not have always been able to conceal his forebodings. If so, and indeed in any case, it would be like her to do her best—her violent best, one may say—to profess enthusiastic confidence; hence perhaps the legend of her crying, "C'est ma guerre à moi!" and so forth.

This trait, a belief in keeping people's spirits up, was amusingly manifest in a visit she once paid to the sick-bed of her old steward.

"But you are looking splendid, M'Laurin!" she said to the dying man; "we shall soon have you back at work again!"

"Now don't you believe it, M'Laurin," sobbed his very Scotch wife—"that's the Empress's kindness! But the doctor says you'll never be better in this world, and if you're alive to-morrow it'll be a miracle!" And after the Empress had gone, poor M'Laurin remarked: "I hope Her Majesty 'll come again soon; *she do cheer me up so!*"

Her comments on this incident were very funny. "O this Scotch truthfulness!" she cried. "If the poor man has got to die, what harm to let him hope to the last?" adding: "when my time comes, Heaven grant that I may not be surrounded by truth-telling friends!"

These and other details I found in a few letters of my own, miraculously preserved by one of my family. Thus I am able to state a fact I had quite forgotten—namely, that at the end of 1892 she believed in a possible return to power of her dynasty. Let the political historian say what crisis was raging in France, but she then thought there was nothing for it but the Commune—or else an appeal to the people—"and there is only one name that appeals to them," she added. I well remember that the individuals who came out worst in that particular

fracas were the very same who had combined to vilify her in 1870, and I remarked that she must rejoice at this exposure of her enemies—a sentiment I should not have uttered in later years, when I came to know the strength of her public feeling, and her complete immunity from personal points of view. Her reply was that she took no pleasure in this side issue of an incident that made her sick and miserable for France. "If they must attack each other, why do it in such fashion?" she exclaimed.

Here M. Pietri struck in—Pietri who, as I have said, adored her, and of whom, in spite of her detestation of Corsicans (though why she detested them I cannot recall), she was as fond as it was possible to her to be fond of any one. Alluding to her magnificently kept resolution never to defend herself, since defence involves attack, he said slyly: "Si l'on attaquait à la manière de l'Impératrice on serait inoffensif!" With a flash of her eyes the Empress retorted: "Ah! moi je ne suis pas Corse!" "Non," said Pietri, who loved chaffing her, "une fausse Espagnole!" which was one of the epithets used, in a very different sense, by her enemies, but which in this case meant a Spaniard who meekly accepts insult! And this particular application of the phrase, involving a compliment to Spain, delighted her.

She would have been less than human, however, if Bismarck's revelations concerning the Benedetti telegram, which were published about that date, had left her indifferent; and next time I saw her she cried, almost triumphantly: "Vous voyez comme on a raison de ne pas se défendre!" Yet I think what gave her as much gratification as anything, in connection with that affair, was the joy of our own Royal Family at seeing her and the Emperor vindicated at last—thanks to the cynicism of the arch-plotter's confessions—from the charge of having brought about the war.

II.

All who knew her would agree on one point, that never was a more baffling conundrum than the Empress's character. It was quite possible to predict how she would feel or act on a given occasion, but impossible to "rhyme," as the Germans say, her warring characteristics.

Take the question of pride, for instance—keynote to the attitude of incomparable dignity maintained by her since the fall of the Empire. It did not prevent her, as we see, from kowtowing to a journalist; and though she had reason enough, Heaven knows, for limitless gratitude and affection as regards Queen Victoria, it seemed to me unnecessary, and

rather humiliating, to conceal her convictions on a given subject when in that august presence, for fear of giving annoyance. And yet at times she did so.

Again, take the matter of kind-heartedness. In certain ways she was, without exception, the kindest person I have ever met in the whole course of my life—the most lenient, the most considerate, and the least exacting. Nothing was too small to be thought out and done by her if it was a question of giving pleasure or alleviating pain, whether of mind or body. Yet she was capable, even in the case of old friends and old servants, of a curious hardness that would amaze and puzzle. What had touched that chord you could not imagine, . . . but there it was, and I have no doubt that the causes were her lack of intuition, or poetic imagination, as to character, and her extremely halting and uncertain sense of humour.

Writing the above sentence, I once more become aware that no sooner have you stated definitely, "She was thus and thus," than you find yourself obliged to qualify the statement. I suppose poetic imagination includes the power of understanding the spirit of an utterance or an action, and no one would kindle more readily at an instance of moral beauty that appealed to her. But it was quite on the cards that the reverse might happen, and that, far from chiming in with your Hymn of Praise, the comment would be: "Dieu! comme il a été bête, celui-là!"

Her sense of humour was perhaps the most incalculable element of all. She would enjoy the ludicrousness of dear Sir Evelyn Wood falling on his knees before her on the gravel path and kissing her hand, in the costume he adopted when driving over from Government House on Sundays to play lawn tennis at Farnborough Hill; which costume consisted of a top hat, a frock-coat, white flannel trousers, and tennis shoes—his extremities being enveloped, while he sat on the box, in a rug, lest the camp should be scandalised at the Sabbath recreations of its commandant. In fact, obviously funny situations appealed to her much as they do to children. Moreover she could be exceedingly funny herself, and would tell a story admirably and effectively, the only drawback being that, having finished, she would instantly tell it a second, and perhaps a third time, . . . with regrettable amplifications and explanations — which I have been informed is a not infrequent Spanish trait. She was an admirable mimic, too, in some cases—in others an execrable one—and seemed to have no idea which were, and which were not, her masterpieces in that department. But this was probably the result of immunity from criticism—a corrective she could entirely dispense with in regions of greater importance, being critical and merciless to a fault as regards herself.

A story she was fond of telling, and told to perfection, was a little scene between the then Crown Princess of Prussia, later the Empress Frederick, and her cousin, the Grand Duchess X—(not a favourite cousin)—which took place in the Imperial box at the opera. The Empress had marked with secret trepidation the growing "nervosité" of the Crown Princess, which finally culminated in a remark addressed with chilling intonation to her Russian kinswoman: "I do not like being called Vicky," she observed, "except by members of my own family." Thereupon the other, examining the house through her bejewelled opera-glass, said lightly: "Eh bien, ma chère, je t'appelerai comme tu voudras . . . Altesse Royale si tu le désires! . . . *Et toi, tu m'appeleras Altesse Impériale!*" One could well credit the Empress's account of her own agony, seated in that box between the august combatants.

Last summer she gave me a most amusing account of the visit paid by her to the Sultan, on her way home after opening the Suez Canal—a visit she was requested to pay, so she told me, by the English Government, the Sultan being Suzerain of Egypt. He sallied forth to meet her man-of-war in a *caique* built to hold one passenger only, himself; nevertheless, she was obliged to step into it, and was rowed to shore at a terrific pace, practically sitting on his knees. I may add that she was the first sovereign of her sex received by His Majesty, and of course the only woman with whom he had ever been seen in public. One must allow that on this occasion he seems to have done the thing with commendable thoroughness.

Apparently she had cherished a hope which at that time must have been still more fantastically unrealisable than in voyages undertaken by her later,—she had actually dreamed of stealing about Constantinople *incognita!* but unfortunately her host would not leave her for an hour. I had forgotten for the moment the Sultan's notorious infatuation, and asked why he had been so embarrassingly attentive? "Mon Dieu, je ne sais pas!" said she, for, as I have told elsewhere, she never referred either to her beauty or to the passions it inspired. But Madame Antonia d'Attainville, one of her young relations — companion, preferred before all others, of her later years—winked at me and said, "C'était sa grande admiration!" Then I remembered the whole thing, and said we all knew that the Sultan had often expressed his regrets at having met her too late, &c., whereupon she ejaculated "Bêtises!" and went on to tell us that nothing would persuade the Turks but that her suite was her harem. They thought it was always like that in the case of female sovereigns. "Pourtant," she remarked, "ils étaient presque tous bien vieux . . . et si ça eût été ainsi, je les aurais choisis plus jeunes!" And in this connection she quoted an

enchanting Spanish proverb: "Si vous voulez aller au diable, au moins allez-y en voiture!"

Now all this proves that in some ways she had a keen sense of humour, but one of the most hopeless undertakings in the world was to try and tell her even very obvious jokes. How describe her puzzlement—her desperate efforts to understand—her agonised attempt at a laugh, followed by some remark which clearly proved that the point had escaped her! One could not refrain from telling a funny story sometimes, in order to witness its still funnier reception. She was fond of saying that she preferred English "humour" to French "wit," which she described as "de l'esprit sur le pointe d'une épingle," and I cannot help suspecting that her extreme difficulty in understanding that sort of "esprit" had something to do with it.

But if for once, to use an expressive vulgarism, she really did catch on, . . . what triumph! what a scene! It reminded one of a child's delight blowing open a watch! That joke would be repeated by her over and over again, its anatomy analysed, and comment after comment would satisfactorily prove to you (and herself) that the point had been grasped. And once more you realised—as in other cases where, perhaps, it was less a matter of unmixed delight—the childlike quality of certain aspects of her spirit.

Again, as regards artistic feeling, one is puzzled to say how much of it she possessed. I have said that pictures were a sealed book to her, and one of the difficult moments at Farnborough Hill was being called upon to admire works of certain famous painters of the Second Empire which were unhesitatingly accepted by her as masterpieces. Nor can one deny that such decorations in the house as she herself was responsible for were not in good taste. Yet it is certain that she must always have dressed beautifully, and in later days her costumes were the perfection of appropriateness, simplicity, and grace. She once told a very elegant sister of mine that in the old days no pains were too great for her to take as regards her toilette, but that once she had left her dressing-room, she never gave the matter another thought—which is exactly what one would expect. There is no doubt whatever that she loved nature; but I have come to the conclusion that this particular form of sensitiveness to beauty, which is shared by some of the least artistic people I know, can have nothing to do with the so-called artistic temperament.

On one point no qualifications whatever are needed. Any one more totally devoid of musical instinct I have seldom met. She was quite aware of this, and would make fun of herself on the subject, as testified by a unique autograph I have, and which, I think, dates from about 1895. She had forgotten all about it, as I found out last year when I remarked that probably no one

but myself possessed a composition by the Empress Eugénie. But on reflection I think it must have been a case of copying, for I do not believe she would have been capable of an original effort of the kind. I may add that it consists of two bars of music, written on a sheet of letter-paper, and bears the superscription: "Two days and two nights work!! Eugénie."

Countless are my memories of her connected with music—among them her touching belief that the Prince Imperial must have had strong, though undeveloped, musical proclivities, inasmuch as, when a baby, after hearing Madame Alboni sing, he reached forward out of his nurse's arms, and putting his fingers on her vast throat, said "Ici! ici!" It was a charming anecdote, but seemed to me rather an indication of the map-making genius for which the prince was celebrated when a Woolwich cadet than a proof of musical instinct. For Madame Alboni was so enormous that people used to call her "the elephant that has swallowed a nightingale"—and to find the right spot on so large a surface was a remarkable feat for a baby in arms. But if one had said so to the Empress, this is the sort of joke she would not have understood. Besides which, she would have preferred her own reading.

Once upon a time the singer Henschel, who was staying with us, asked me if I thought she would like him to sing to her Schumann's "Two Grenadiers"? Of course she said she would be delighted; but as it was to be sung in German, I took the precaution of explaining that Heine's poem was an immortal tribute to the Great Emperor. This explanation seemed to be unnecessary, for apparently she knew all about the song (in which, as we know, "The Marseillaise" is introduced), and no doubt had heard it scores of times in the French version. None the less, next day she remarked to me: "Quelle drôle d'idée de votre ami de me chanter cette chansen-là... 'le Kaiser... le Kaiser'!" Horror-struck, I explained matters all over again, and needless to say that at the time no one would have suspected a hitch anywhere; her manners were proof against far severer trials than this!

Close on the heels of this incident came a similar one, if possible more surprising still. One day she paid a visit to the County Lunatic Asylum, and on her arrival the band (composed of lunatics) struck up "Partant pour la Syrie," which is the hymn of the Napoleonic dynasty and is attributed to *la Reine Hortense*. I felt certain that it was not on their usual repertory, and must have been specially studied for the occasion; so as we drove away, I remarked that to play it in her honour was a delightful idea on their part. The Empress gave a great jump: "Comment?" she exclaimed, "vous êtes bien sûre que c'était 'Partant pour la Syrie' qu'ils ont joué? . . . Il me semblait connaître cette mélodie-là . . . mais j'ai pensé que c'était *God*

save!" . . . And a letter was despatched expressing her gratification at this delicate attention.

I think no one can ever have had greater natural violence of temperament than the Empress. Age may be supposed to have mitigated it, but as late as 1918 I have seen her possessed by a passion of wrath, and pouring forth a torrent of magnificent invective, such as few young women could emulate. We had been discussing the future of Serbia, and gradually worked round to the murder of King Alexander and Queen Draga. None have ever disputed the proposition that these unfortunate sovereigns were puppets of Austria, and I had been contending that this fact should count, to a certain extent at least, in defence of a people struggling for independence. But the Empress hated and disbelieved in the Slavs. Moreover, Austria was one of her sacred subjects, owing chiefly to the romantic attachment she cherished for the aged Emperor Francis Joseph.

This cult found expression in a visit she had paid him not long before the war, and her fond belief was that one as sorely stricken in his domestic affections as she herself would inevitably share the emotion she felt at the thought of their meeting again after all these years. Pathetic illusion! blatant instance of her lack of intuition as regards character! . . . I do not suppose that in the whole world you could have found another monarch who, on being informed of her desire to visit him, would merely have said, as did that cold-hearted old cynic, "Was will denn eigentlich die alte Eugenie?"[1] This supremely characteristic remark went the round of Vienna, and greatly amused the Viennese, who rather admired, but had no illusions concerning, their venerable sovereign. The following winter was spent by me at Vienna, and when, on my return to England, the poor unsuspecting Empress cross-questioned me as to the impression her visit had left in his faithful heart, for once I lied—and lied freely.

To return to the murder of the unfortunate Alexander and Draga, the Empress's contention was that the horrible circumstances of the crime, though carried out (as she must have known) by a Court cabal, proved the Serbians to be a race of barbarians, unworthy to take rank among civilised nations. Thereupon I could not refrain from pointing out that no nation, civilised or otherwise, had gone the lengths of the French in the unnamable charges brought by a more or less regularly constituted tribunal against Marie Antoinette. It was not a bad retort, for Marie Antoinette was a still greater idol of hers than the Emperor Francis Joseph, . . . and for the moment she could

[1] What does old Eugénie want?

not think of an adequate rejoinder.

Nobody likes being cornered, and one could not expect a woman of ninety-three, and an ex-Empress, to like it more than another. As a matter of fact, large-minded as she was, and far from demanding other deference than that due to her age, she was not accustomed to her *dicta* being opposed. Pietri was of course a privileged person, though she did not always endure his bluntness with equanimity; otherwise I think young Count Clary, son of her former Master of the Horse (?), and myself, were the only two people who ever ventured to contradict her, for which reason she bracketed us together as "mauvais caractère, tous les deux!"

Long, long ago I remember a splendid onslaught of hers. Something I said infuriated her to such a pitch, that she suddenly seized me by the shoulders, and, with an "allez-vous en pour vous calmer!" ran me bodily out of the smoking-room, dragging one half of the double swing-door to with such violence that I found myself involuntarily plagiarising the young lady of Norway. I cannot remember hearing of any similar outbreak throughout all the years that lie behind me, and fear I must have begun by showing temper, or at least unseemly zeal, myself. Anyhow, to continue the plagiarism, if the door squeezed me flat, well may I exclaim "what of that!" for I never think of that scene—the Empress's swift concentrated fury and the herculean strength it gave her—without laughing.

Her usual method of signifying annoyance was a way she had of looking at you without seeing you. Suddenly you would find yourself reduced to the status of a plate-glass window, thus to remain for several hours, or in extreme cases for several days. Another plan of hers was to address her replies to some third person. Any one would do; and thus some maiden, who happened to be at the tea-table, between two sets of tennis, has found herself recipient of the Empress's views concerning protection, colonisation, or the principles of foreign policy. One day last summer I was lunching alone with her and Madame d'Attainville — as so often happened,—and being by no means sure of my sympathy, she addressed her scathing analysis of the English Government's fiscal policy to Antonia, who naturally had not studied the question, but none the less went on comfortably murmuring at intervals: "Mais oui! je crois bien!... naturellement!" and raising her eyebrows at the proper places, though I fancy her thoughts were elsewhere. At last the Empress saw the ludicrousness of the situation, and remarked: "Je m'addresse à toi . . . mais à l'intention d'une autre personne!"

There was one particular manifestation of annoyance that could only be studied

at meals. The Empress had told me that toothpicks, together with a certain overthorough, not to say dreadful, use of finger-bowls, were forbidden by the Emperor at the Royal Table. But in my day the toothpick had come back again, and at certain critical moments you might watch it turn into a weapon of warfare in the Empress's hands. Brandished right and left, it gave point and emphasis to her argument; put to its proper purpose, the while she listened with simulated patience to your reply, nothing but the reflection that never was a human body made of more magnificent material than hers, relieved your anxiety as to the outcome of so furious an onslaught. Meanwhile her eye would be fixed on you sideways, darting such disgust and aversion, that you were thankful it was only a toothpick, and not a stiletto, she held in her *crispé* fingers.

I must add that sooner or later after these little scenes, she would be at special pains to soften down the impression —perhaps put her arm round the offender's shoulder as the party trooped down the corridor. On one such occasion, quite in early days, I remember her saying to me, "vous n'êtes pas commode, ma chère!" It was said chaffingly and in all friendliness . . . but she meant it!

I love insisting on the violence of the Empress's temperament, because apart from its being so wonderful a thing at her age, one must remember that it was this immense force, tamed and channelled, that held her unswerving in the road of heroic endurance she had marked out for herself, and made of her a live and inexhaustible source of beneficence where others were concerned. There was one Royal House she detested, for political reasons of course: "I would rather see them dragged down than ourselves uplifted!" she exclaimed one day; "could I but live to witness their downfall, I would willingly accept an extra spell of purgatory in exchange!" She raised her voice, and raised her arm: "Ce sentiment que j'éprouve. . . ." But here Pietri cut in with one of his amused little comments: "Ce n'est pas un *sentiment*, Madame, c'est une *passion!*" —"Eh bien," cried she, "c'est la dernière que j'éprouve"; adding in accents of tragi-comic regret, "*et combien faut-il encore pour la réchauffer!*"

Less than she imagined was sufficient to rekindle the fire. True, it did not often flare up to this extent, but association with her was like a stroll on the upper slopes of Vesuvius; a chance stumble cracks the cool lava . . . and lo! the sole of your boot is smouldering! It was this eternal ardour, combined with a powerful brain and unlimited intellectual curiosity, that kept her so young, and guaranteed her against boredom. An advance in science, a new discovery in medicine (which I trust one is not expected to class among

the sciences) was a fortune to her bookseller, for no scientific or technical book was too recondite for her. She was a great and wise doctor herself, and thanks to her medical instinct and knowledge—also no doubt to her magnificent constitution — was able to tackle with impunity certain Spanish dishes — high explosives, swooning in languorous oil — that daunted even her own compatriots. Her firm intention to go up in an aeroplane was crossed by the war, and her only consolation was to reflect that her growing blindness would have taken away half the pleasure. "But if, when peace comes, I recover my sight," she said, "then . . . nous allons voir!" . . . And I have not the slightest doubt that, had she lived to return to England, she would have gone up in an aeroplane—not by-and-by, but this very summer.

I fancy hers was one of those natures that love danger for its own sake. Old as she was, and surrounded by people who felt it to be their duty to say "don't," if there was any danger going she wanted to be in it. At one period of the war the Germans were said to be planning to bomb Aldershot, and one objective would certainly be the Royal Aeroplane Factory, just beyond her park. "S'ils viennent," she said, her whole face lighting up with excitement, "au moins nous serons au premier rang!" . . . and I could not help fancying that the presence in her house of a guest who made no secret of her own extreme dread of air-raids, rather enhanced her delight in the prospect.

To one whose physical courage was so flawless, whose sense of honour was so passionate, it must have been torture that among the cruel things said of her in 1870 was the attributing of her flight to fear. . . . As Empress she had walked the cholera hospitals. Those who at that time said "don't" —and there must have been plenty — were not listened to. But the French would seem to have forgotten the incident. I never heard her allude to that monstrous imputation of cowardice, but in the early days of the late war one was to learn how it had rankled.

When the French Government removed to Bordeaux, Paris became a desert. A former *Dame du Palais* of hers was among those who took refuge in England, . . . and though, when I saw her in Paris two years later, she did not comment on her reception by the Empress, I can well imagine it! What she did tell me, however, was, that the Empress had instantly announced her own determination to start for Paris then and there. "If I left after Sedan," she said, "it was in order to save bloodshed, . . . but some said it was from fear! Now I will prove to them that that was not the reason!" My informant added that if, after unexampled efforts, she and

the rest of the "don't" party carried the day, it was by insisting that if the Empress were to go to France it might make difficulties for the French Government, . . . which she would rather have died than do.

One of the strangest things about her was that, notwithstanding this unquenchable fire within, you felt instinctively that love can never have played a great part in her life. People have said that her skill, as Cæsar's wife, in avoiding the breath of scandal, is a great proof of her "cleverness," but I suspect it was still more a case of absence of temptation from within. She was not tender, for one thing, nor imaginative; and imagination plays a great part, I think, in women's love affairs. Above all, not to beat about the bush, there was no sensuality in her composition. Age has nothing to do with it. There are old women who are far from being that *bête-noire* of the Empress "de vieilles folles," in whom you none the less feel how great a part that element must have played in their youth. Without their realising it, to the end of their days their whole outlook is thereby coloured. But in her case you felt convinced that it must have been the feeblest string of the lyre from the first.

She was anything but lacking in romance, however, and given a temperament so passionate in other respects, it would be strange indeed had there been no love episode. Even the least amorously gifted should be able to fall in love once in a lifetime, and that much she accomplished. Unfortunately this was not a subject it was possible to broach with her, and her contemporaries, among whom the story was no secret, are dead long ago. But it is well known in the inner circle, and I think there is no indiscretion in repeating it as it was told to me by a relation of hers—one deep in her confidence, a faithful, ardent admirer, to whom, in a rare and fortunate moment of expansion, she herself communicated the details.

One must begin by saying that the Empress idolised her sister—in my humble opinion this was the strongest emotion of her life—and after the Duc d'Albe married that sister, their house became her home. A certain Duc de S—— became deeply enamoured of the Duchess, and in order to gain easy access to the house, made love to Mademoiselle de Montijo, who, suspecting nothing, fell desperately in love with him. The truth having dawned upon her, she did exactly what one would expect her to do under the circumstances—took poison; and when the fact was discovered, nothing would persuade her to swallow an antidote. Finally, as a last resource, the man she loved was brought to her bedside to break her resolution, . . . and as he bent over her he whispered, "*Where are my letters?*" Well can I imagine that his victim's love thereupon per-

ished in the blaze of her contempt! "You are like Achilles' spear," she exclaimed, "that healed the wounds it had made!" . . . and forthwith she swallowed the antidote.

Even if the story had not come to me from an indisputably reliable source, one would be certain that it must be true in every detail. She herself was probably proud of only having loved once; myself, I wish she could have had the experience of a second and happier passion. But to wish that is to wish the Empress had been some one else, . . . which is inadmissible.

The anomalies of her mental equipment were nowhere more baffling than on the field of politics. I am not venturing to speak of her political action in France; nothing save the lapse of time can decide how far it went, and as I have hinted, there were documents in her possession which, to my certain knowledge, would reverse many a settled conviction.

Judging by her character, and in spite of a qualified sympathy with democratic ideals, I imagine she must always have been an absolutist at heart. I remember her saying that though the English monarchical system was undoubtedly the only one suited to England, to be a ruler bereft of real power would not appeal to her personally, nor did she think the position dignified "au fond." At the same time she allowed that to fill it adequately required a rare combination of qualities—especially in war-time; "and if you were to search history," she added, "you could not find a more ideal war-time monarch than *le roi Georges*."

As for the verdict of history on herself, a very sympathetic cover-notice in the 'Revue des Deux Mondes' for this month (August 1920) quotes a bitter remark I have heard her make more than once: "Ma légende est faite; au début du règne, je fus la femme futile, ne s'occupant que de chiffons; et, vers la fin de l'Empire, je suis devenue la femme fatale, qu'on rend responsable de toutes les fautes et de tous les malheurs! . . . Et la légende l'emporte toujours sur l'histoire!" One day, in the last summer she was to spend at Farnborough (1919), she said, "Je déteste les gens qui ont peur de la responsabilité. On veut me rendre responsable pour les événements, . . . bien! j'en accepte la responsabilité! . . . au moins j'ai l'air de l'avoir accepté, puisque je me tais!" . . . Then, after a pause, she added, "C'est l'orgueil," . . . and I shall never forget her accent as she said it—the proud magnificent expression that was on her face. . . .

Nevertheless, towards the end of her life, when the Great War, monstrous epilogue of the Bismarck revelations, opened all eyes to Germany's designs of world-dominion, I think she came to believe in the silent depths of her heart that that legend of "la femme fatale" might some day fade out of existence. I would often

urge—only one had to put these things very carefully, so intolerant was she of anything that might be construed into flattery—that the self-restraint exercised by her since the fall of the Empire must shed a reflex light on the past. And she herself was surely too sensible, too just, to believe that such testimony could be swept aside as worthless. So, at least, I hope.

I think the Empress cared for politics more than anything, and if you take passionate interest in a subject, it is hard not to believe yourself specially equipped for it. One day I had been asking her who were the most *fascinating* personalities she had met, and among them, greatly to my surprise, she mentioned Bismarck! "When it was worth his while," she added, with a peculiar look on her face, "no one could be a more adroit courtier." To extol her beauty would have left her indifferent, and suddenly it was borne in upon me that he must have laid himself out to flatter her on the score of her political *flair!* It was late in the sixties when last he was in Paris, and such flattery would have been well "worth his while!"

Whatever her political action and influence may or may not have been in France, listening to her comments on current English politics, I reluctantly came to the conclusion that seldom was any one more pertinaciously wrong-headed! If black seemed the obvious colour to name, she would say white; if the turn to be taken lay on one hand, she would maintain that salvation was to be found on the other. And, still stranger fact, although, as better judges than myself can testify, her political knowledge was unlimited, her judgment on past events sound and even brilliant, there were certain political factors which she seemed incapable of grasping, because the collective states of mind connected with them escaped her.

The Dreyfus case is an instance. This was a conundrum to which she possessed no clue. People who knew nothing whatever about France might be excused for racking their brains as to what it was all about, though to others who, like myself, had some acquaintance with French mentality, *l'Affaire*, however regrettable, was comprehensible. But the Empress never got beyond asking how it was possible that a *question of justice* should be treated in such a fashion? I have said that a sense of justice was among her ruling characteristics. Here it was outraged, and her lack of insight into the spirit of a people did the rest.

She had believed from the first in the innocence of Dreyfus, and was amazed at the storm which this conviction brought about her head. Not that she would have shrunk from proclaiming it in any case, but it is strange that she failed to realise the state of feeling in France. Her earliest intimation of it was the be-

haviour of the very first person who came to see her as she passed through Paris—a lady, who began with the three profound *révérences* which, it appears, are *de rigueur* on entering the presence of royalty. ("Je vous dis cela," interjected the Empress, "pour vous montrer la personne.") But when, as was inevitable, *l'Affaire* was broached, and the Empress's views became manifest, her visitor fled from the room in horror, without even *one* curtsey! She also told me that she and the Duchesse de Mouchy had all but quarrelled for good and all on this terrible theme—"that is to say," she added, "it was the Duchesse who was almost ready to give *me* up!" But this, of course, was a humorous exaggeration.

Again, during the late war, her sentimental attachment to the Emperor Francis Joseph, and perhaps, too, an old political hatred of Italy, made it impossible to her to see the inevitableness of the break-up of Austria; and I perceived that she knew nothing, or rather chose to know nothing, of what the Austrian Empire really amounted to—a conglomerate of states in which different languages were spoken, and which were welded together by the cement of mutual hatred. She had read every word of a book I had taken malicious pleasure in calling her attention to—my friend W. Wickham Steed's classic study of the Hapsburg Dynasty—and ever since she had been desirous to know the author—a desire that was fulfilled in the last year of her life. But for all the conviction it brought her, she might never have read that book at all, . . . and it was the same when the subject was discussed between her and the author. Amenable as few people I have met to new ideas, in some directions you were up against a wall; and her one reason for tolerance of the Jugo-Slav idea was, I fear, that she knew it would be a thorn in Italy's side! Otherwise, whether from the standpoint of European tranquillity, of the peculiar interests of England (which she desired to see safeguarded at all costs), or even of abstract justice, she refused to admit the *raison d'être* of a Jugo-Slav State.

Still the fact remains, that the person of my acquaintance I most intensely longed to see at all critical moments in the last five nightmare years, was the Empress—so sane and so unshakable was her faith in ultimate victory. She was blessedly free from that belief in their own strategical powers which temporally clouded the intellects of many of one's most revered friends; and once she made me laugh by saying, in reference to H. Belloc's far-famed articles in 'Land and Water': "Je déteste les livres qui vous donnent l'illusion de comprendre des choses dont vous savez très bien que vous ne les comprenez *pas!*" She gloried in the raising of Kitchener's army—a feat to which the patriotism and de-

votion of no other country in the world, she said, would have been equal; and later on she was even more fired by the fine attitude of Sir Douglas Haig, and the armies he led, in the matter of the Supreme Command. Of course England was not the only nation called upon to make that gesture of magnanimity; but the problem between ourselves and France was peculiarly complicated, and the Empress maintained that such a triumph of commonsense over national vanity could only happen on this side of the Channel. "Ah! you are an easy race to govern!" she would say wistfully.

All the same, I am sorry to say that she, who up to 1914 had worshipped England and English ways to an extent that sometimes seemed to me excessive, would now level many a reproach against us.

There were many reasons to account for it. As years went on she had become intensely Spanish, and I think felt a little uncomfortable about Spanish neutrality; but the form it took was railing at the stupidity of the English, who wanted all countries to be dragged into the war, and did not see how greatly it was to the advantage of the Allies that Spain should remain outside. During the first two years of the war I had been away, either in France or Italy, so do not know if she was speaking generally, or referring to some special incident.

Then there was the censorship, and the special supervision exercised over a foreign establishment such as hers—matters in which I thought her curiously unreasonable. I imagine that here again the Spaniard in her was specially sensitive. "Here am I," she would say angrily, "whose love for England has all my life amounted to a passion, who have taken up my abode among you, half of whose house has become a hospital for your wounded officers. . . . Not that I think anything of that," she threw in quickly; "it is my duty and my pleasure—but at least it shows where my heart is! . . . And yet it would appear that I am *un personnage suspect!*" It was vain to try and make her see that a principle was involved, that her Swedish footman, or other of her foreign servants, might receive and write letters, or do deeds it was impossible for her to supervise. She was wounded in her pride, and either couldn't or wouldn't see the point.

D.O.R.A. and all her works were anathema to her. "I will not live in England when the war is over," she once said, though I knew she did not mean it; "this used to be a free country where people were left alone, but now you shower *des petits papiers* on one, just as military-mad Continental nations do, and ask for oaths, and dates, and signatures! It was because there was none of that over here that one loved England." And one day, when I remarked, possibly with some heat, that we had perhaps been too careless in the past, and that

anyhow it was only reasonable to take precautions in war-time, she looked at me curiously. "Strange," she said, "how the war has changed even you! You used to listen reasonably and with good humour to criticism of your country; now you are up in arms at a word!" I couldn't exactly speak my thought, which was, that when your country is safe and at peace, you do not mind fault-finding, but when it is in the throes of a life-and-death struggle, the carpings of ever so friendly and beloved a foreigner are hard to bear. Yet something of this sentiment must have made itself felt in my reply; I think she partly understood . . . and partly resented. And the whole incident is referable to that trait I spoke of—lack of comprehension for the collective sentiments of a people.

On the other hand, everything connected with her hospital was a source of unmitigated joy to her. How human she was about it!—how delighted, one June day in 1918, when the King and Queen came to inspect it! "People will take it seriously now," she said, "and that is what I want." Well they might! No modern appliance was too expensive for her, no contrivance for the comfort of her wounded officers too far-fetched, too complicated for her eager thought to devise. How proudly she said one day last year, "Not one of them but, when he was well again, has come to see me." And if, in the case of a slow and doubtful recovery, her constant pre-occupation was touching to witness, the one or two deaths that occurred under that roof plunged her into such grief, that one day, speaking of a boy whose third operation seemed likely to end badly, Antonia said, with reason: "On craint autant pour l'Impératrice que pour lui, le pauvre garçon!"

And I must not forget to say, that all and any means of increasing a patient's hold on life were welcomed by her. There was one young lady-visitor whom we used to chaff about the devastation her visits wrought in their hearts; "Tant mieux!" said the Empress, "cela leur fera du bien d'être amoureux!"

She used often to insist on the faultless manners of her patients: "Many of these young fellows are clerks, solicitors, engineers, not necessarily belonging by birth and education to the class of gentlemen; and yet there is not one of them whose behaviour has not been perfect—modest, dignified, grateful, all one could desire! 'Comme ils sont foncièrement bien-élevés, les Anglais, n'importe d'où ils viennent—de l'Angleterre ou des colonies anglaises!'" And she went on to say that young Frenchmen of the equivalent class might easily have fallen into bumptiousness, by way of proving they were not shy; "and of course it would have been because they *were* shy," she added.

Her hospital was one of the

last to be demobilised; she refused to do it till absolutely commanded. Meanwhile she informed all the patients, many of whom were to convalesce in the neighbourhood of Aldershot, that they could have the run of her house and gardens. "'Puisque je vous ai connu *au lit*,' je leur dis, 'impossible d'être plus intime!'"

One day last autumn Maurice Baring, for whose whole family she cherished a special and comprehensible attachment, lunched with her at Farnborough Hill, and afterwards he said to me: "It is useless telling people, as one does, that the Empress is wonderful. Only those who see her can know *how* wonderful she is. . . . She is thirty at most! so brilliant, so amusing, such delicate exquisite tones in her voice, when, bending her head a little, she puts in some *nuance*. . . . She is the marvel of the ages!" (That is why, as I said at the beginning of these recollections, it was so impossible to think of death in connection with her.)

She was very amusing that day. "But these nice English boys I am so fond of," she said, "know little of history. In fact, they know nothing at all"; and she told us that when Antonia was showing one of them her *cabinet de travail*, he pointed to the full-length portrait, by Cabanel, of Napoleon III. with the sash of the Légion d'Honneur across his breast, and remarked—

"That's M. Poincaré, isn't it?"

But even more incredible was the comment of another patient of hers. There hangs at Farnborough Hill a celebrated picture, I think by Bougeraud, of Romeo and Juliet—and of course the group is full of amorous suggestion. Here the remark was: "That's the Empress, I suppose?" Few things ever amused her more than that naïve assumption.

As if to soothe the national pride of Maurice and myself, however, she allowed that Americans are still more hopeless as regards history. She told us that soon after the Philippine war, her yacht found itself moored, in the harbour of Naples, between two American men-of-war, and that both captains were for ever urging her to come on board their vessels. At last she pointed to the Spanish flag, flying, together with the Y.C.S. ensign, at the masthead (or wherever such emblems do fly), and said to her would-be hosts: "Well, you see, I can only go on board *with that!*" The captains looked profoundly puzzled; then one of them exclaimed, in a flash of intelligence: "I have it! I guess you're a Spaniard!" And the Empress said (I should like to have seen her face as she said it!), "Yes, I am a Spaniard."

It was just after the Armistice was signed that Mr Steed went down to see her. Under the transparent disguise of "a Correspondent," he has told the story of that visit in 'The Times,' but one or two of the incidents are so arresting that

it is worth while repeating them here.

She had observed that although Clemenceau had always been one of the bitterest enemies of the Second Empire, she could willingly embrace him now, so magnificently had he served France in the hour of her greatest need. Nevertheless she considered he had made a great mistake in not waiving, for the moment, his anti-clericalism, and attending the recent celebration of the Armistice at Notre Dame. "It would have been a grand lesson," she exclaimed, "in union and moderation," and went on to point out that he could still retrieve his error by attending the similar celebration that was shortly to be held in Strassburg Cathedral. Here Mr Steed asked her if he might give M. Clemenceau a message to that effect? but she said, "Non . . . je suis morte en 1870."

A few days later Mr Steed repeated her words, though not as a message, to M. Clemenceau, who remarked: "Well, she will be disappointed again; I shall not attend that celebration in Strassburg Cathedral!" . . . But he did; and what is more, in publicly recounting his impressions of the ceremony, he told how he had seen a little old nun softly singing the "Marseillaise" under her coif, . . . "which," he added, "is a lesson to all of us in moderation and unity." He may, as Mr Steed remarks, have forgotten the Empress's words, . . . but there the fact remains.

That day Mr Steed brought down with him a copy of *Le Journal*. In it was a picture of a woman and her little boy, standing beside one of the many battle crosses that were the only crop I saw in the north of France after the war; and the little boy is saying: "Mère, est-ce que père sait que nous sommes vainqueurs?" The paper was lying on a side-table, and I called the Empress's attention to the picture, reading aloud the text, which I knew her dim eyes could not decipher. I shall never forget how she gripped my arm in her amazingly strong fingers, and, looking across the park towards the Mausoleum, whispered: "Je l'ai bien dit aux miens là-bas!"

Another vivid recollection of mine is the account given me a few weeks previously in Paris by her friend and dentist, M. Hugenschmitt, of the celebrated letter written to her after Sedan by the King of Prussia, which letter she passed on during the late war to the Archives of France. It was in reply to one from her, in which she had implored him, for the sake of future peace, not to make the mistake of annexing Alsace-Lorraine; and the point is, that, far from looking on these provinces as ancient German territory, which was the claim put up in later years by the Germans, the King wrote, that if they should decide to *annex French territory*, it would not be from any desire to enlarge Germany, "which," he adds, "is large enough already," but in order to guarantee themselves against

future attack by France. Knowing that Clemenceau was one of M. Hugenschmitt's patients, the Empress bade him take a copy of the letter to shew the Minister, who at once saw the immense importance of the document, and begged that the original might be deposited in the Archives.

Together with that letter were others from the Emperors of Russia and Austria, which M. Hugenschmitt was also permitted to read; and in returning the packet to the Empress he asked if he might take copies of these as well. "They are a wonderful justification of your Majesty," he added. But the Empress snatched the parcel from him, saying: "I will have nothing said or done in my own justification. I have long ceased to care about that." And nothing that M. Hugenschmitt could say would move her from that position.

When I came home I spoke of all this to the Empress, who confirmed it in every detail, adding: "I told Hugenschmitt to impress upon M. Clemenceau that I gave up the letter, not to the *Government*, but to *France* . . . that I wished it put in the Archives . . . and that if he chose to use it, I could not prevent him!" Watching her proud face, the flash of her eyes, that at such moments seemed undimmed, the incredible transformation of an old into a young woman that always happened when she was deeply moved, I could not help wondering if M. Clemenceau would catch the *nuance* of that message. . . .

Afterwards the conversation veered in the direction of William II., who, it may be remembered, had paid her a surprise visit in her yacht years ago, somewhere in the North Sea. She remarked that he had obviously taken pains to make that visit an agreeable one . . . and succeeded. I reminded her of what she had said to him, almost as farewell word: "For the sake of the principle of monarchy *don't upset any more thrones!*" and we spoke of the downfall of his own throne, utterly without what the Germans call "Schadenfreude" on her part,—that is, pleasure in the misfortunes of others. Speaking of revolutions in general, not of 1870 in particular, she said: "It is not that your enemies dethrone you . . . c'est que le vide se fait autour de vous;" and I thought of what Napoleon had written about the battle of Waterloo—"tout d'un coup je me trouvais seul sur le champs de bataille. . . ." That same day she had been reading the account of the cheering of our King at Buckingham Palace: "It is the most intoxicating sound mortal ears can hear," she said, . . . and then her face changed suddenly . . . "and no one who has not heard it can realise the horror of its *pendant* . . . the roar of a crowd that has only one desire—to tear you to pieces."

(To be concluded.)

MAHSUDLAND, 1919-1920.

BY GANPAT.

CHAPTER I.—THE WAY.

"WHEN Allah made the desert, he laughed." So say the Arabs, but he who has seen the Waziri frontier, with its arid summers of blinding dust-storms and scorching heat; its bleak killing winters, when the biting gales from the bare grey hillsides sweep down the tangis across the ice of the nullah-beds,—must wonder what Allah said when he made Waziristan.

Thus, indeed, did I wonder when first I came to this land of desolation, and, with the Arabs, thought of Allah's laugh as he made such places—a sardonic, cynical, mocking laugh—the laugh of a Mahsud squatting astride a helpless wounded man as he twists the knife in slowly, for my soul was bitter within me.

I passed in time by devious paths and many, by roads of fatigue and tracks of pain, and came in the end to a reading which pleased me better, and think that my soul was somewhat healed thereby. If you, oh reader, care to follow these pages, you shall see, with such skill as I can portray them, the scenes and paths we passed.

If you take train at Pindi, you crawl out slowly through the rich cultivation of the Punjab with its teeming villages and fertile fields, its slow processions of cattle homing to the byre—wild-looking, mud-streaked, black buffaloes, with staring china blue eyes, and slim white oxen, under the charge of keen-eyed unwashen urchins; while to east of you the pine-clad Murree hills fade into the purple haze of the evening sky.

You awake in the morning in a new country, the rolling sea of cactus-strewn sand-dunes which is the divide between the Western Punjab and the North-West Frontier Province, that fecund land of Romance for the Indian novelist.

If you are young and all athirst for war and glory, you hang out of the carriage windows as the train passes the little wayside stations, with their bastioned loopholed keeps; and craning your gaze to the far horizon, where, amarynth against the cobalt background, a fringe of sharp-toothed mountains stabs the sky, rejoice your soul at your first view of the Promised Land of the frontier.

If, however, you are older and war-weary, as many of us are now, you look out in the cold dawn air at the distant hills, and murmuring "same old fly-blown frontier,"

snuggle up in your blankets again. You think of your last leave, years and years ago, hope for your next one, and curse army headquarters for sending you to grill and freeze on the border hills, when your only prayer is for leave, long leave, to the flesh-pots of home or the bliss of an old puttoo suiting in a smiling dreamy Kashmir valley, with the iris all abloom and the snows of Haramukh rose-pink above the Wular.

Later in the morning you sort yourself out, and, either on horse or afoot if you be with a regiment, or in a tonga if you be a "reinforcement," or in a car if you be a distinguished globe-trotter or merely a common hired assassin returning from leave with a friend on the staff, you take the road to Mahsudland. You hie you from Darya Khan, along miles of low-lying sandy road to where, across the rapid streams of the Indus, a little oasis in a dusty, thirsty land, lies Dera Ismail Khan, "Dreary Dismal," Queen of the Derajat, a clump of scented rose-gardens and green lawns fringed with feathery palms.

This is a new country, you realise, even merely from the fresh types you see and the speech you hear—from the fact that the police go armed, and the men wear "chaplis" (leather sandals) rather than shoes.

Also you know it when your car is halted at the swaying boat-bridges, to let the long Afghan powindah caravans pass—great shaggy camels laden with the skins and fleece and merchandise of Bokhara, led by bushy-bearded burly men in baggy trousers, with the ruddy complexions of Italian mountaineers or fair-skinned strapping women in shapeless black overall garments and braided hair.

From Dera Ismail you drive your forty miles into Tank, along a dusty white tree-lined road, dead flat all the way. On one side of it now runs the little Decauville railway, with its two-foot gauge toy-trains puffing along at eight miles an hour, truck after truck heaped high with bales of bhoosa for the transport animals, or sacks of atta for the troops, and a drowsy guard of sepoys in the rear truck.

Mile after mile of glaring flat, sandy riveraine country, but changing nathless as you go, for the powindahs are more often armed, each man's belt crammed with cartridges; the villages are walled, and here and there have high watch-towers, with look-outs, and ever the hills in front draw nearer, grow higher, more menacing. At last, passing Hathala rest-camp, with its sandbagged picquets and its barbed wire, you realise that you really are in the "dāman," the comparatively rich flat country at the feet of the hills, where the Mahsud and the Wazir claim, as their hereditary right, the privilege of raiding a night's run from the hills.

The government of the Punjab, whether Moghul, Sikh, or British, has continuously disputed this claim; while Mahsud

and Wazir alike contend equally continuously their age-old right to raid, punctuating their claim with stark corpse, blood-trail, and flaming thatch all up and down the Derajat.

Consequently this year of grace 1919, when the Big Four sit at Versailles to conjure up the millennium, sees us, the P.B.I., out again on the edge of empire trying to impress on the sceptical Pathan the beauty or, failing the beauty, the stern necessity of peace. Peace, however, implies the Pathan's refraining from cutting the throat of the Derajat villager merely because he tills better land and owns more cattle than that shiftless anachronism, the frontier tribesman. A hard task when the said sceptical Pathan knows that the week's work spent in a successful raid will set him beyond the need of work for a couple of years or so. When he knows further that once back in his foothills he is safe from all retribution, save after every twenty or thirty years, when his accumulated misdeeds cause long-suffering India to turn out a punitive force, it is small wonder that he prefers raiding to honest toil.

The evening sees you in Tank, a dusty, uncomfortable wired camp sprung up around the nucleus of the old Militia post and the political bungalows. You drive in over the level crossing where the main line from Kalabagh enters, for the toy railway from Dera Ismail Khan is only a subsidiary route, of much diminished value when the Indus floods down from the melting snows in the hot weather and the boat-bridges have to go.

Tank is a city in the plain, well into raiderland, and if you are new to the game you may lie awake and listen to the "Barder," as the frontier constabulary are locally called, firing at raiders—or shadows—and the picquets loosing off Very lights, or chucking bombs to keep up their spirits.

Next morning sees you away in a car (always postulating your high globe-trotting estate, or the existence of that useful friend on the staff) down the metalled highway to Kaur Bridge, where the Gumal road runs through Murtaza into the hills, the derelict piers of the unfinished bridge marking the present limits of the Pax Britannica, somewhat a shadowy pax this year, alas! Then you turn up the slope right-handed to Manzai, another wired camp, now advanced Headquarters of the Waziristan force, telegraphically addressed as "Wazirforce," and described by the irreverent as "*Was*-a-force."

The frequent roadside picquets, and the little Ford Vannette Lewis gun patrols with their big brothers, the armoured cars, threading their way through the long straggling fleets of motor transport which run between the railhead at Kaur Bridge and Khirgi, show that you really are on the frontier; and looking to your left, you see nestling at the foot of the hills Girni Post, which not so long

ago took a battalion and guns to visit, for all that it lies in British territory.

You drive through Manzai and out again along five miles of stony road in undulating, black, rock-strewn country interspersed with sandy nullahs fringed with high sun-dried grass. Then, as the hills loom and narrow before you, you find yourself at Khirgi, one of the main gates of Waziristan, a mass of white tents below the old mud fort, on the precipitous cliffs that overhang the Tank Zam river, more correctly, but less frequently, known as the Takhi Zam.

You leave your car here because the motor road ends, and hereafter on your pilgrimage you will meet nought but the humble and useful camel, and those old friends, the horse and the mule. If you climb to the top of the fort where the Union Jack flies and stand by the sentry, who stares across the stream scanning the gaunt black hills beyond, you will see that the river turns sharply into the mountains—for these are mountains to an English standard, though since we must husband our terms in this country lest we be short of adequate words later, we call them merely "hills."

A sharp-cut defile, a stony river-bed with a string of camels, and on the face of the cliffs a labour corps blasting out a road, while high above them in the little sandbag-topped stone picquets show pigmy sentries' figures.

So you see it now and look well, for it is "the Gate," the portals of the hot and cold hells of the Buddhist creed, but the gate to a land which shall prove a man's worth beyond all lands. He who would endure to the end in this icy, fiery, flint-hard corner of the earth, must be what the Mahsud is every time, in spite of his obvious faults—a man.

We saw it first just as you see it now, except that there were no strings of camels, no labour corps, no lonely skyline picquets. These adornments had to be put there later. When first we looked out from the tower at Khirgi the river-bed was empty, and the black hillsides were bare save for the rare movement that marked the snipers, whose bullets splashed occasionally against the mud-walls of the fort.

And we knew in those days that except for lonely Jandola, at the other end of the pass, to whose garrison we sent up, furtively, and on days whose date was secret to the last moment, fortnightly convoys of rations and stores, no other British flag flew beyond Khirgi, which stood then on the edge, almost the uttermost edge, of Empire, though miles this side of the Durand line.

So before you enter, look well at the gate, and as you ride up day after day, mile after mile, between the naked and precipitous hills, and later under the towering heights of the wooded mountains, consider the days before the picquets were, and perhaps you will spare a thought for the road builders and picquet

makers, the P.B.I. of no import, who at cost of endless blood and labour fashioned you this safe road into the heart of Mahsudland.

Having seen your baggage roped on the camels and started up the "road," you get you to horse, follow down the steep incline to the river, and turning left-handed, make your way at snail's pace up the winding track in the boulders which crosses the river twenty-three times in seven miles. As your pony splashes through the streams, you can once again thank all your stars that you are not one of the wretched infantry whom you see plodding along beside you, for to wade knee-deep through water frozen except where it runs too fast is a poorish pastime.

Thus rode up one morning in December the cavalry man and I—he come up as a reinforcement to the 57th Wilde's Rifles, I hauled back from fifteen days' leave, whereof I got but two. Above us, like flies on a wall, a pioneer company were working on the new motor road to Jandola; alongside of us paced strings and strings of unwieldy camels laden with bales of forage, boxes of ammunition, coils of barbed wire, crates of oil, petrol, aeroplane bombs, and all the endless miscellany that an army needs. We overtook and passed a toiling Gurkha regiment labouring through the stream, and came presently into the Hinis Tangi. A "tangi" is that common frontier feature, a narrow precipitous gorge cut sheer through the rock by æons of rushing water.

The muffled detonation of a couple of bombs caused us to look about for a large and kindly rock, until we spied a small group of men around a pool. We rode up to them cautiously and discovered friends—to wit, "Breeks" of the 3rd Guides, who with two companies of his merry men was enlivening the rather dull procedure of picqueting the road by bombing fish.

Their appearance was far from military, albeit extremely warlike, but that is in accordance with the best taste in Mahsudland. When Wana was evacuated at the outbreak of the Afghan War in 1919, about two years' supply of khaki had to be abandoned owing to the lack of transport, and the looting tribesmen arrayed themselves in much glory of Spinners' best fast-dyed.

The Very Great therefore decided that for the present, in order to avoid confusion, we would let the Mahsud and Wazir wear khaki and ourselves go into fancy dress, and the word went forth, "anything you like in reason, but *not* uniform."

So each and every regiment devised unto itself a fancy war dress—some electing grey jerseys, others brown cardigans, others again grey back flannel shirts worn, *more indianico, outside* the nether garments.

"Bally Neapolitan fishermen," said "Breeks" disconsolately, indicating his braves

with one hand and holding up a large fish with the other. "Look at me."

Baggy, shapeless breeches, a rough brown jersey, and a rakishly-tied turban over a much-peeled face. Certainly if not a Neapolitan fisherman, he was but one remove from a Levantine pirate.

The squat-faced grinning Gurkhas and clean-featured Dogras around him were similarly disguised, save that they had rifles loaded and cocked, for we had come into the land where always, in peace time as in war, you move with your weapons loaded and your pistol-holster hitched well forward.

"Come and dine to-night," he shouted as we pushed forward. "We've got a beano on."

More stony river-bed, more icy streams, more precipitous forbidding hills high above us, until we turned a corner, when lo! a plain lay open before us, a patch of a few square miles of nullah-intersected country with a couple of towered villages. To left, up on a plateau above the river-bed, the two forts of Jandola, the military post and its more diminutive civil brother, square bastioned works with, newly sprung up between and to one side, a long straggling array of canvas and rusty wire, the camp of the 68th Brigade.

Past strings of camels, empty and laden, past a Bristol Fighter whose pilot was revving up his 250-horse-power Rolls Royce Falcon, on past the great iron fort gates to the La Touche Arms, where the lonely traveller finds food and tent and—at a price—beer.

The great war taught the Frontier a few things, not the least being the necessity of that invaluable institution, well-appointed rest camps, where drafts and odd officers coming up can get food and shelter on arrival instead of having to wait weary hours sitting on a bhoosa bale until the baggage comes in.

So, nowadays, echeloned down the line at each post, you find the serried array of E.P. tents, whitewashed guide-stones, and notice-boards inviting you to enter and repose you in a Rurki chair, and refresh your inner man with food and drink served in glass and china on real tablecloths. You arise later, a lot later, a better braver man, and perhaps soothed by good food and tobacco, feel that, after all, the Indian Government is not quite so bad as you thought it was.

Napoleon said that armies march on their stomachs, but "Was-a-force" marches on the La Touche Arms, whose value as a morale raiser to the detached officer, especially in the early strenuous days, would be hard to estimate.

After tea you meander round the camp, sucking the pipe of content, and mark the localities of the various messes against the hour of sundown. All good soldiers bear in mind the importance of knowing thoroughly the interior of their camps and the necessity of getting into touch with flank units. Also, is not our brigadier always trotting round to

inquire, "and *have* you taken tea with the friends on your left?"

A little device in white-washed pebbles. "Ah, the 3rd Guides." You make a mental note for 6.30 P.M. Their whisky macdonalds of a cold night convert you from a soulless frozen clod of mud into a chevalier *sans peur et sans reproche*.

Also you recall their telegram, franked O.H.M.S. to Bombay for 500(0) Corona Coronas and the Force Commander's even more famous wire equally franked O.H.M.S.

"Units are not allowed to send state telegrams for mess stores, a.a.a. If you can spare will take 200 Coronas on arrival."

A little further another white-washed device, a regiment of Bombay Rifles this time. Succulent memories of Club of Western India Milk Punch arise before your mind's eye, and you make another mental note.

And so you go on until your visiting list is full.

You drift slowly back through rows and rows of tents, big E.P. hospital marquees, with piles of stretchers outside, smaller 160-lb. tents full of sepoys, cleaning their kit, their rifles, themselves; playing cards, chatting, sleeping, with perhaps now and then one more literate reading aloud to his pals from a tattered vernacular newspaper in flowing Persian writing or square-cut Nagri script.

Little groups of followers' tents, packed rows of kneeling camels and heaped-up camel palans, squealing, kicking mule lines and twenty-foot high pyramids of bhoosa bales or atta bags.

A tarpaulin-covered dug-out with a sentry and a notice "Petrol—No smoking," and a bomb dump show that the Air Force has a hand in the game. Later you pass an engineer field park, with coils upon coils of barbed wire, bundles of pickets, dumps of explosive.

And so perhaps into the fort to send a telegram, to the little room with the blue-and-white flag outside, near where the tiny twin-cylinder Douglas engine of the pack wireless purrs and buzzes intermittently.

Once again are you tempted to climb the keep (one always seems tempted to climb towers in strange places), and struggling up steep ladder-like stairs, you emerge on the loopholed roof where the sentry stands by the machine-gun, and the search-light nestles in its sandbag empalement. Standing thus on the outer fringe of the Bhittani country you look out to the north and west where the Tank Zam runs, silver threads of water in a white stony bed, cutting through the many-coloured hills about Palosina into the heart of the Mahsud country.

Left of you, lost in a tangled mass of sharp-cut mountains, slate-blue in the evening light, lies the Shuhur Tangi, the narrow road to Wana; to right lies the Spinkai Raghza, a barren, stony, bushy plain, split up by endless nullahs; while in front, to the north-west, stands up the long, low Sarkai Ridge, the scene of the Decem-

ber fighting when the Mahsud made his first memorable stand.

Beyond Sarkai, ridge after ridge, ever higher and higher, a dog-toothed and knife-edged fantasy in myriad-coloured rock, Mahsud Waziristan spreads out before you, twisted and cracked and tortured into every conceivable shape, climbing away afar to where pine-clad Pir Ghal's snowy peak blocks the north-west horizon,—a pitiless, stone-hard country, whose any tangi might have served Doré for the Inferno, bearing a people fiercer, harder, crueller than the rocks they spring from.

But if there be any spark of imagination left in you, and you can pull your mind out of the clinging morass of war-weariness and endless mental and physical discomfort of these late years, you may be able to discern some faint conception of purgatory. Yes, if matter can still reveal to you something of the spirit, you may perhaps see faintly the image of the soul, tattered and stained, passing through extremes of fierce cold and heat, toiling over parched jagged hills, hanging on reeling at the lips of dizzy precipices of utter blackness, until it emerges some day, somewhere, having drunk to the full the bitter waters of experience, but gained step by step the hard-bought knowledge of the secret of the end, and master at last of itself.

This, perhaps, is the purpose of Waziristan in the scheme of things, to mirror faintly to us that path of purgation which each and every soul must tread unto the end.

So at least it came to my errant mind as I sat smoking on Jandola keep one day in the early evening, and the thought was balm to a troubled soul, harassed beyond all bearing with the eternal recurrent "Why?"

John Oxenham's half-remembered words came back to me over the empty years:—

> "To every soul there openeth
> A way, and ways, and a way . . .
> . . . But the high soul climbs the high way,
> And the low soul gropes the low;
> While in between, on the misty flats,
> The rest drift to and fro."

And it seemed to me then, as it seems now, that the road into Mahsudland *was* indeed for some of us a way of purgation—that is, a way wherein by constant unceasing endeavour, by endless painful stumblings and restartings, a man watching others climb "the high way" might learn by unstinting service to his fellows to be master of his own soul, and so, quitting "the misty flats," come in God's good time to "the peace that passeth all understanding."

CHAPTER II.—THE ACTORS.

Having now, oh reader, induced you to cast a preliminary glance over the scenery, I will present to you some of the actors. Since in all well-conducted pierrot entertain-

ments the first number is a concerted item, following good precedent, I will ring up the curtain on the troupe.

The scenery is hidden, for it is but 4 A.M. of a January morning, and the little crescent moon has long since sunk through the jewelled velvety indigo of the western sky to her rest behind the dim formless hills. The stars are beginning to be partly veiled by driving wisps of cloud, and the icy wind that sweeps down on to the camp cuts to the bone—for all that, like the sentries, one is muffled up in a heavy-lined greatcoat over a leather jerkin, big gilgit boots, and woolly cap and gloves, while the sleeping men around are snuggled with all their clothes on under as many blankets as they can share.

Come with me, then, along the little stone perimeter wall, behind which the men are just starting to turn out, past where the sentries sit in pairs on ammunition and bomb boxes, keenly alert, despite the early hour and the chilling numbing cold, since this is a seasoned regiment which does things quietly and without flurry. No need to rush around kicking up drowsy sentries, when each man knows the price that might be paid for sleep before an ever-watchful foe.

Dim forms move here and there; you catch the jingle of the saddle-chains of mules, the clank and rattle of tool-kajawahs, the metallic sound of rifle-bolts worked backward and forward. Yes, seasoned soldiery, I said. Only the raw stuff starts out at dawn against the Mahsud with an untried weapon.

That's the mess-tent door, that little jagged line of light to your right: mind the steps, the sandbags are rather worn; and watch your head, the ridge-pole sags a bit.

So into the fuggy tent where the acrid wood-smoke clings and the hurricane lamps seem to make the shadows darker—sit down anywhere you can find a box; we don't run to chairs much here. "What's for breakfast?" "Herrings, sausages, bacon—all from tins." None so bad, though 4 A.M. is a trifle early. But screw your appetite to the sticking-place; you'll be glad later that you started with a square meal—unless, of course, you catch one below the belt.

Also cocoa—also rum. Pussyfoot hadn't soldiered in Waziristan in winter.

Now let me point out one or two of our troupe.

The C.O. there, in our only chair, small, rotund, hook-nosed, and ruddy of countenance, with twinkling eyes, and a red blebbed green forage-cap glued to his head as ever, night or day. Does he sleep in it, we wonder? A jovial soul withal, pessimistically cheerful or cheerfully pessimistic turn by turn.

The Adjutant, large, round-faced, with pleasant eyes and a quiet determined manner, a tower of calm strength in a sticky place.

"Jock" yonder, "D" Com-

pany skipper, taciturn Scot, Hodkin of "C," and several more make up the company, finishing in the far corner with the "Babe," pink of cheek and smooth of lip, but a few months out of the military college at Wellington.

Also the doctor filling flasks from a bottle of three star, a little, youthful, dark-faced Madrassi, who laments the restful equable atmosphere of the benighted presidency, but yet will be out each day to climb unnecessary hills and risk a bullet, to set fly-traps in the picquets. Like all embryo medicos—he is little more as yet—he loves describing "innards" and larding his speech with the phraseology of the materia medica. But plenty of work with first field dressings will cure him of that soon.

The muffled-up servants pass and repass with the dishes, while the mess havildar ceremoniously presents us all with packets of sandwiches and curry puffs in case we find time for lunch.

A silent meal at best, punctuated from time to time by dry humorous remarks from the C.O. and pessimistic interludes by Hodkin, who loves not early risings.

The only person with any flow of conversation is the second-in-command, his garrulity due to the fact that it is his day to remain in camp, and he is duly and properly repressed.

A farewell cigarette and out again into the cold darkness, to shed some of the pleasant warm clothing, not owing to the night air having warmed, but because you cannot go up 600-foot rock hillsides in North Pole kit. Turbans replace cap comforters, and belts and bandoliers are donned in the faint hope of deluding the lynx-eyed Mahsud into mistaking you for a Sepoy.

The dim scattered forms about the camp have now coalesced into large black masses where the companies have fallen in. A few movements, a few quiet words, reports exchanged, an order or two, and the dark masses change to shadowy snakes creeping away in the gloom through the mazy camp and are lost in the darkness.

Come with me down to the river-bed, and pick your way as you go, for the road is none of the best, sown as it is with endless pitfalls of tent rope and wire, sleeping camels and drowsy men. We tumble down a steep rocky slope into another floor of the camp, and butt into a crowd of stretcher-bearers getting ready to go out, on through high-piled supply dumps, down another slope to another flat, musical with the jinglety jink of laden gun mules.

A nightmare vision of writhing sinuous neck, horrible pendulous lips, and a putrescent breath surges open-mouthed upon you, and stepping sideways to dodge a loose camel you trip over the bloated stomach of an over-fed S. and T. pony, who jumps to his feet with a scurry of hoofs and wild snortings of alarm.

You wriggle clear and push on into the gloom once more, bump into a column of armed men, get your toes trodden on by a Lewis gun mule in the endeavour to avoid a tornado of hoofs and teeth and twining rope, as an ammunition mule bursts out of the darkness with two breathless dishevelled Sepoys clinging to its ears and bridle as they vainly endeavour to extricate a badly-tied box of bombs that has slipped between the brute's legs. That terror passes squealing into the uncertain grey dawn just beginning to lighten the gloom of night. You pull yourself together and make your way downward, ever downward, stumbling, tripping, cursing, until at last you reach the level and are aware of men and animals converging in serpentine columns into the stony bed of the river.

The growing light is just sufficient for you to make them out as they pass near by, silent for the most part in the cold damp wind, for a fine drizzle of sleet and rain has just begun.

Brown jerseys and bandoliers, small, sturdy, dark-faced men—Mahrattas of the 109th, steady, resolute, eminently reliable. Follow longer leaner men, lighter of complexion, often bearded—the Rajputana Musalman company.

They fade away again in the half light, and behind them, clattering, clanking files of mules, two sections of No. 27 Indian mountain battery, come slithering down the hill. Big, burly, bearded Sikhs and strapping Punjabi Musalmans with Greek features and bobbed hair; officers and men alike in sleeveless leather jerkins girt in with leather waist-belts; beautifully-kept mules with screw guns in bits, 2·75's; the wheels and axle, the carriage, the trail and shield in two bits, the recoil buffer, the front and back halves of the gun itself, and mule after mule with leather panniers of shells.

They pass, crashing through the thin ice at the river's edge, and the clatter of their tread on the stones dies away as they are succeeded by another column of infantry, small laughing men in Tommy's serge jackets and webbing equipment, with Cawnpore topees mostly a size too small perched on their little bullet heads.

The 4/39th Garhwal Rifles, the "Tor Gora" as the enemy calls them, the "Black Whites," tribute to their magnificent stubbornness on Long Ridge when they fought him hand to hand for a whole afternoon to cover the building of Scrub Hill picquet, and when withdrawing in the evening they made a feint retirement and a counter-attack that checked the Mahsuds' desire to close with them for many a long day.

Ruined Kotkai village with its roofless houses, fallen tower, and piles of cold grey ashes mixed with fragments of calcined bone, shall long stand monument to the Tor Gora. They cost the Mahsud dear in lives to kill, and dear in gear for funeral, since their funeral pyres were built of the Kotkai house timber, and the watch-

ing enemy from the heights around could see the little men in helmets heaping the ghi-fed pyres from the woodwork of his houses to the dirge of the bursting shells and the "o-r-r-r-ump! o-r-r-r-ump!" of the bombs from the droning 'planes above.

"Thus was the samadh perfect, thus was the lesson plain
Of the wrath of the 4th Garhwalis, the price of the Garhwal slain."

So might one paraphrase Kipling.

Succeed led horses, a general and staff on foot and a trio of signallers, a British lance-corporal, a Dogra lance-naik and a Punjabi Sepoy conferring together in heaven alone knows what tongue.

An open space a second, and then the slipping stones herald more arrivals—black puttees, black leather bandoliers, the 1/55th Coke's Rifles, an original first line frontier force regiment, Sikhs, Dogras, Punjabi Musalmans, Cis-frontier Pathans, and a sprinkling of Afridis. With them a small company of wild-looking men wearing Pathan-tied turbans and chaplis, the Khuttack detachment of the South Waziristan Militia, vociferously cheerful and itching for a chance to get even with their old-time foe, the Mahsud and Wazir raider.

Guns again, British gunners now, No. 6 Howitzer mountain battery, dazzle-painted, double-trailed; dumpy guns in bits on powerful mules, guns with ranges beyond all old-time dreams, and practically every man a N.C.O., for No. 6 is manned by the remnant of the pre-war British mountain batteries, gun crews such as we shall not see again.

And so the actors pass, regiment after regiment, company after company, until at last in the growing daylight, as the little columns creep up the lightening river-bed, and on the heights above the spatter of rifle fire and the occasional detonation of a rifle grenade show that the advance-guard picqueting troops are at work, a lean long-legged figure, clean-lipped, with dreamy blue eyes that veil the clear sharp brain behind, the column commander comes striding down the slope.

A faint watery glow suffuses the eastern sky as the sun comes up behind Thorny Ridge, and the rattle of a Lewis gun rings out, the call-bell for the first turn.

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You clamber back up the steep path to the now deserted mess tent and spend the day kicking your heels in camp, divided between thankfulness that you aren't climbing up impossible hills under fire in the driving rain that seems to have set in for the day, and annoyance at having been left behind on what seems like to be a good show, for the news from in front is cheering, and only a few laden stretchers have filtered back, whose occupants, if capable of describing anything, imply that all is well ahead and the day going in good style.

You watch the long camel convoys coming in from down the line, each sarwan with his sinuous string of beasts roped nose to tail. A hard life is the camel sarwan's, loading up his beasts day after day at 3 A.M., marching hour after hour through the half-frozen streams, back into camp perhaps at 3 P.M., just in time to water and feed his beasts and pitch his tiny tent ere dark, when perhaps he'll get some food himself.

And living always cheek-by-jowl with smelly, grunting, gurgling, snarling, ungrateful camels. But probably the Oriental doesn't mind this last part, which would prey upon a European far more than all the long hours.

Deracol owes much to the untidy sarwans and the ungainly camels, and most of all to the hard-working transport officers, for without that trinity we should have gone nowhere in this land, where roads are unknown and a horse a rarity.

After lunch you stroll down into the hospital to glean news and watch the doctors at work, as the wounded arrive, for the stretcher parties are more frequent now. A burly Jat comes in, his ripped-up trouser leg showing a blood-stained bandage. Follows a little Mahratta, laughing and waving cheerily to a pal, and even if you can't follow his liquid speech his whole attitude would convey to you its sense: "Luck's in—me for the Poona train—Good-byeeeee!" and he waves his sound arm.

He is dumped down, while an assistant surgeon lays bare a great hole in the man's calf, and presently another clean little perforation in his upper arm. He is washed, dressed, tied up again, ticketed, labelled, and carted off to a tent where he is planted out under blankets on a stretcher, provided with cigarettes, and left retailing to an envious circle of his less fortunate unwounded comrades how he intends to spend his leave in the Deccan.

Inside the big E.P. tent a couple of white-aproned doctors are working on a head case on the little operating table, intently busy with shining instruments and rolls of lint and wool. A poor chance at best, for a Kabuli martini bullet makes a nasty mess of the human brain. You can see that much by the doctor's face as he bends over the recumbent figure, whose stertorous breathing, frothy lips, and staring, unseeing eyes eliminate all need for any assumption of make-belief optimism.

Other stretcher parties come in with their loads, and each in turn is attended to deftly and swiftly, save those blanket-covered ones that pass out again to the far end of the camp, where a party of Musalmans stand round the narrow-niched trenches, or to the river banks where the Hindu pyres flame.

Some of the actors have spoken their brief parts, and for them the curtain has rung down for good in this play, and they depart to new rôles, new scenery. As one watches the stiff forms being borne

away, the grand words of the Bhagvad Gita surge to the memory:—

"For just as one who layeth his worn-out robes away,
And taking new ones, sayeth, 'These will I wear to-day,'
So lightly puts the spirit aside its robe of flesh,
And passes to inherit a residence afresh."

Thus the day wears on in the casualty clearing station, with its steady unending round of dressings, morphia, anti-tetanic; and late at night, if you pass, you will see the doctors still at it under the swinging lamps—silent, grave-eyed—immersed in their task of patching up the players for the next act of the drama long after the rest of the camp has sunk into sleep, outworn with wadings in ice-cold water and clamberings over break-neck heights.

Gone, thank God! are the dreadful days of 1914 and 1915, when the wounded or sick man in the side-shows seemed expected to heal himself or die, and the overworked doctors stood by helplessly watching men die for lack of sufficient medical appliances. The administration of frontier wars may still have points to remedy; but at least one knows that now, if only you can be dragged out of the clutches of the Mahsud and not have your throat cut—or often worse—as you lie helpless, everything possible will be done to get you on the quick road to recovery.

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The grey January evening is drawing in as you sit on the little outcrop of red-and-green rock at the north corner of the camp watching the columns of men and animals winding back down the river-bed—column after column of sodden and weary but cheerful men, and string after string of laden mules with dripping loads and soaked harness. The guns pass again in bits, big tarpaulin covers lashed over the gun parts and saddlery.

The firing has died away, and one hears only occasional rifle shots, where a few snipers are worrying the newly established picquets.

The regiments come splashing through the streams in the drizzling rain, and string into file up the steep path to the camp—a mixed mass of men and mules, all alike anxious for the food and comparative warmth of camp, for hot drinks and rum, for jhools and bhoosa.

At the rear—lines of men strung out across the river-bed and little khaki figures tumbling down the hillsides—the rearguard sweeps the river clear, gathering up here a fallen mule, there a belated slow-moving stretcher with its tortured load.

And over all the heavy leaden clouds closing down on the half-veiled, unfriendly, grey Mahsud hills whipped by the soulless breath of the northern gale.

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CHAPTER III.—PICQUETS.

I think it is in "With the Night Mail" that Kipling coins the phrase "transport spells civilisation." In war you may invert the principle and say "civilised armies spell transport."

In the old days when armies were smaller and their requirements less, when to a great extent they lived on the country they traversed, when twenty rounds of ammunition was a fair allowance for a fighting man for a small campaign and machine-guns were not, transport was not so important, and lines of communication could often be dispensed with at will.

Operations in the barren No Man's Land of the frontier and in the sparse tribal country beyond, necessitated, it is true, a line of communication, even if of an exiguous type, but a perusal of old records shows us what a shadowy travesty of the modern article it really was.

When we first entered Waziristan in 1860, the force marched from Tank *vid* Khirgi, Jandola, Kotkai, the Ahnai and Barari Tangis to Makin in five marches. To march from Jandola to Makin this time has taken us over two months. And the reason of this lengthy period may be given in a single hackneyed phrase—"L. of C."

With rifles capable of getting rid of fifteen shots to the minute and Lewis guns eating up ammunition at the rate of seven to eight rounds per *second*, not to mention quick-firing guns and mountain howitzers; with large numbers of wounded to be evacuated, and well-equipped hospitals to be kept fitted out; with every ounce of food for man and beast to be brought up from India, and the new and enhanced demands of aircraft, wireless, signals, and engineering supplies necessitated by fighting a foe armed with modern rifles to be coped with,—the L. of C. has now become on the frontier what it has long been in Europe, the dominant factor in war.

But whereas the letters L. of C. in France and in most other theatres of the recent great war conjure up scenes of a region where the armed soldier was conspicuous by his absence, and portly supply sergeants, blue-tabbed D.A.D.O.'s, R.T.O.'s, and babus innumerable functioned in the bustling atmosphere of railheads and distributing centres, L. of C. on the frontier means a zone where the fighting soldier gets as much and sometimes more work than elsewhere.

You see, we do not occupy Waziristan in anything but a technical sense, for all that the globe-trotters visit Kaniguram daily. What we do occupy is four or five fortified camps at intervals of a day's march, between which along the river on certain hill-tops are little stone-built, wire-aproned, pic-

quets. The ground inside the wire of camps and picquets is ours, the rest is No Man's or Mahsud.

By day from each camp goes out a battalion or so, with perhaps a section of guns, and clears the bed of the river halfway on either side, dropping here a section, there a platoon, on spurs or above nullahs opening into the river, until eventually the diminished remnant joins hands with the troops working outward from the next camp, and the road is open.

But the permanent picquets are the real guardians of the route, whose presence ensures its daily easy opening and the passage of the enormous camel convoys required to supply a modern army.

They lie on both sides of the river, from half a mile to a mile apart, on the dominating features on either bank, and thus the troops moving out from camp have only to deal with under-features of ground and perhaps occasionally with small parties of the enemy, for no large parties can collect near the river unknown to the permanent picquets.

Look out by day from camp, and stretching up and down the river you see them receding into the distance, peak after peak, each with its little stone or sandbag post, by night a succession of twinkling signal lamps in the soft darkness under the glowing eastern stars.

On either side of this thin ribbon network of picquets lies the tangled mountainous maze we call Waziristan, where every man goes armed, and every able-bodied man is an enemy.

There is no central Government and no definite army, and each tribal section and subsection is a law unto itself. In consequence, except just in the early days of the campaign when the various sections collected together into a lashkar to oppose the advance of the column, trouble is as likely three miles out of Jandola as it is near Kaniguram. In fact, since the Mahsud lashkars broke up after the Ahnai fighting and, with the exception of those unfortunates whose homes are situated actually in the Tank Zam, dispersed back to their villages, trouble is if anything more likely farther back.

The Mahsud is no fool, and he knows that the bulk of the guns are with the column ahead, which alone is nursed by aeroplanes, and that the picquet garrisons and picqueting troops will be scantier the farther back he strikes. Wherefore L. of C. is no sinecure up here, for a successful large-scale attack on the picquets would have possibly far-reaching effects.

As you ride along now between the picquets and see on the lower crests little subsidiary stone sangars held by day from the parent picquets, and in between, the knots and groups of the convoy picqueting troops, having learnt your trade perhaps on the much-boomed civilised fronts where things were done on a big

scale, you wonder at our slowness in reaching Makin.

But if you have still some sense of proportion and a little of that great essential in life, "humanness," and have possibly in the interludes of moving battalions and brigades as pawns upon a chessboard, gained some slight knowledge of the old-fashioned, simple, but yet more complex type of warfare—the warfare of small bodies of men against a really mobile enemy who does not often miss at less than 700 yards—you will understand better.

That picquet which you are looking at with its rough walls of piled stones topped with sandbags, its crude apron of straggly, rather badly put up wire, and its uneven tarpaulin roof, took two whole days to build.

Recalling your reinforced concrete dug-outs in France, you smile at the idea. Then, perhaps, being at heart an understanding regimental soldier, you remember hearing also that the hill on which it stands had first to be taken in the face of a gathering of tribesmen armed with magazine rifles, each and all a marksman pretty near as good as the 1914 "contemptibles."

It takes you now in your unadorned Sam Browne belt twenty-five minutes to climb to it up a path cut out by the Pioneers. But the men who put it there climbed the hill when there was no track, carrying full equipment, and every bush and rock on the crest held a man who could really shoot.

And when after a couple of hours they had made good the hill, they had to push on in front so that the builders might work undisturbed by anything more than aimed rifle fire. Knives interfere too much with the progress of the work.

So they had to go down and up and clear the next ridge in a similar way. Yes, it is steep; one or two men fell over there, for it's difficult in full equipment, and perhaps carrying a box of bombs as well, to climb across a sheer rock face with people shooting at you, and some of the poor devils slipped.

Only when that next crest was made good could the pioneers and carrying parties get to work and build the rough wall, and hammer those stakes into the rock. Accurate rifle fire makes for rather inaccurate aligning of entanglements.

Then before it was finished, the troops had to withdraw so as to reach camp before dark, and so had to come out again next day and clear the hill and the ridge once more and repeat the work. And there it stands now with its little garrison of thirty rifles, just a quarter of what it cost in casualties to build.

Thus day after day was the road made good, half mile by tedious half mile at a daily price of lives, until one fine day the column was able to move forward three or four miles, establish and secure a new

camp, and then recommence building more picquets ahead, where the same old Mahsuds lay behind the same old rocks across the same old nullah.

Now, of course, it is quiet, and save for the snipers you hear but little firing. A dull uneventful life, with lots of dick and worry and kicks, and mighty few ha'pence, is L. of C. on the frontier.

The early morning start from camp down the river-bed, the little picquets to be sent up on to the hills at intervals, the nullahs to be blocked. One pushes along slowly hoping no one will be there. They've not been seen for nine days now, but that's all the more reason why they should be here, the tenth, hoping that immunity will have made your men careless.

One halts and watches a picquet up; Lewis guns loaded and laid on the likely spots; off they go, two or three lines of men with fixed bayonets clambering slowly up the steep hillside, with occasional halts to restore formation and get breath.

The advance-guard commander scans the ground above them with his glasses, looking for the least movement, until at last the leading line clears the crest and settles down. He heaves a sigh of relief and pushes along to the next spot. Not *this* time anyway, but it may be the next one, or the next picquet but three, or to-morrow, or next week.

He knows it all too well, the straggling line, the careless Lewis gunner who has covered that point every day for a fortnight and never had to fire a shot, the equally careless men grown accustomed to seeing no enemy on that run—and then, suddenly, the ragged volley from the rocks on the crest-line, the sudden rush of dirty figures, the flash of knives, the quick leap back again to cover, and *then* the covering fire breaks out on to the now empty hillside it should have beaten 30 seconds earlier, and all is as it was, save for five good but careless men gone west, and six lost rifles that will snipe the camp that night.

And so the convoy picqueting troops go on, and behind them the slow creeping lines of laden camels string up the river-bed with, scattered among them, little parties of mules and men, taking rations and water to the picquets.

As they work forward the hillsides above the river come to life. Down the steep paths and goat tracks from the picquets come little knots of running, laughing men, carrying canvas chagals for water, kerosene-oil tins for washing, and now and again a slow moving group bearing a sick or wounded man.

This is the picquets' brief hour of life, when for a short space they can stretch their legs, wash in the stream, see new faces, hear news and meet pals. For the rest of the twenty-four hours, for weeks on end, they are cooped up in a little circle of wire, perhaps 80 yards in diameter, or if the enemy is sniping,

shut up in their tiny stone-walled hutch.

The groups of mules break off from the river-bed by twos and threes, and make their way up to the various picquets to dump their loads, each party leaving a couple of men as road sentries with a description ticket in the river-bed to ensure that when the day-picqueting troops withdraw no party shall be left out.

Why *two* men? Why, because this is Mahsudland, where a rifle is worth far more than a man's life, and although the net of picquets is strong, its meshes are not so small that a few determined enemy cannot creep through them and mop up an isolated man.

The convoy quickens its pace a little, and a party of mounted officers, a "Cook's tour" from India, break into a brisk canter for a couple of hundred yards over the boulders, where a camel lies with its neck twisted back, kicking and struggling.

"Tick . . . took—Tick . . . took."

Evidently Adolphus and his pals are in a sportive mood to-day. That's their third camel this week, and they got a man there the day before yesterday. They shoot from that scrub-strewn hill up yonder, and the range is over 1000 yards, but their shooting is none so dusty, and they're pretty good at taking cover, for we haven't spotted their perch yet.

"Pop . . . Pop . . . Pop-pop."

One of the day-picqueting groups evidently think they've spotted them, and will now probably spend a half-hour plastering the hillside with lead. Meanwhile Adolphus & Co. will go home to dinner, and later, after a well-earned siesta, return to enliven the afternoon by a few shots as the picquets withdraw. Painstaking souls!

The obligato stops, the convoy slows to its usual stately pace, the Cook's tourists pull up to a walk, complaining about the hardness of their ponies' mouths, and a few men pull the dead camel clear of the track, strip off saddle and load, gralloch the carcase, and light a fire over it to prevent it becoming too offensive later.

Would you like to look over a picquet? We've plenty of time to-day, for it's a big convoy.

We'll leave the ponies here near that party of men washing in the pool. A joyous-looking lot of souls—little dark Mahrattas of the Konkan, laughing and chaffing. A cleanly crowd, too, with a predilection for cold water.

You can tell a Mahratta picquet miles off by the fact of all their bedding being spread out in the sun of a morning. Your Punjabi likes to keep his gear inside the picquet where he sleeps, and, unless he's strafed enough, will never make or shake or air his bedding until the number of lodgers calls down retribution.

"Here, Maruti, where's the sahib? Oh, gone out, has he. Well, we'll see his picquet, anyway."

Yes, there are British officers out in these picquets, one to every group of three or four. He lives in one and visits the others in turn.

A lonesome life, as you say, but very good for the modern subaltern just entering the Indian Army, since cooped up with a handful of his men for eighteen hours out of the twenty-four, he's *got* to learn their ways and speech—and thereby, if he be of the right sort, grows a mutual liking and understanding which, alas! is too often lacking nowadays, when so much of the officer's time is spent in office work and intensive training of all sorts, and he has so few opportunities of really living with his men.

The pre-war type of Indian Army officer learnt to know his men and speak their speech ten or fifteen years back, not during the hours we sat in office or in the dull monotonous periods of parade, but during those spells, week-ends and ten days, out in the jungle miles from a railway, just oneself with half a dozen of one's men and some jungli villagers. We sat round a wood fire of an evening and heard strange old-time yarns of kings and tigers, of djinns and peris, of sahibs long forgotten everywhere except just in the district where they worked, told in the rough speech of daily usage that could not be learned from the vernacular text-books.

Or we wandered into villages and, sitting under the peepul tree by the red-painted carved snake stones, had speech with the grey-bearded elders, as we drank the fresh warm milk served for the guests, and discussed to the best of our meagre ability crops and rain, news and prospects of recruiting, while a crowd of lesser lights sat in the background to stare at the sight of a European, perhaps the first they'd seen for a year or more.

And our orderlies sat near throwing chests and telling lies about our excellence and valour and straight shooting, leading their hearers by inference to understand that naturally the servant was as the master, only more so.

And by degrees, as our halting speech grew more fluent with the years, we learnt to understand some little fraction of the minds of these our people, and had the silly preconceived notions with which we first landed in Bombay knocked out of our heads, and our minds broadened until we began to realise in the end that caste and creed and custom are after all but small excrescences on the underlying strata of human nature, which is pretty well the same everywhere, however different the outer weathering may appear.

But the modern rush of army life leaves little time for this old-fashioned leisurely way of doing things. Nowadays at the end of a long day's intensive office work and training, the weary British officer demands rest and relaxation and change of company, and so there is danger of his never coming into real contact with his men, since real contact with the Oriental is only to be gained in leisure hours, not on parade.

So this picquet life should

be good for the men who are coming in now to take the future of the Indian Army into their keeping, too often, alas! with no old experienced hands to guide them.

A long pull up a very steep narrow path of loose stones, where we pass a man driving up an unwilling sheep, the meat ration, and a couple of mules laden with metal pakhals of water, and here we are at the picquet. The top of the hill is a narrow hog's back, and just at the highest point stands the picquet, a circular wall of rough piled stones, loopholed and topped with sandbags to keep down splinters from bullets; a cleanly well-kept picquet, with its little plot of beaten earth lined out by smashed stone of varying hues in a geometrical pattern, surrounding the tiny shrub, substitute for the sacred Tulsi plant.

Another Mahratta trait that, of carrying the homeland with him wherever he goes. You can forget the naked savage hills and the far snow-line and think yourself back in the dreamy Dekhan, rich with old palaces and rose-gardens of dead kings as you smell the fresh leeped earth of the picquet floor and note the spotless surroundings, so different from the dwellings of the North Country men.

There is something English about this homeliness of the Mahratta, a something which conjures up visions of laughing, skirted, unveiled women instead of veiled, trousered pillars of secrecy, and familiar everyday virtues and vices instead of the uncouth ones we read of in the Old Testament.

Outside, under cover, a couple of squatting men are cooking on a little mud flat, and the sizzle of ghi rises on the air. A couple more are busy making chupattis, the flat, round, unleavened cakes of flour which replace bread in the East.

We pass through the belts of rusty barbed wire into the welcome shade of the picquet, where four sentries stand at the loopholes with rifle loaded and bombs handy, and a Lewis gun lies ready in its emplacement.

It is a trifle cramped, with rolls of blankets and waterproof sheets, boxes of ammunition and bombs, a little dump of rations, and a big canvas water-tank, but it's not too bad. When the snow was down, the men, packed like sardines, were glad enough to huddle together for warmth, but shortly now it will be stiflingly hot at midday.

Nothing much to see inside, very much like any fire-bay in any trench—the loaded rifles, the bundles of equipment hanging on pegs driven into the wall; a group of men playing a weird form of whist in a corner near where the British officer's little 40-lb. tent is pitched, dug down inside for increased space, tiny but comfortable withal.

The havildar in charge proceeds to dispense hospitality as we rest in a tarpaulin-covered patch of shade, mopping our faces after the climb. Bowls of tea flavoured with ginger, potato chips, little

fried cakes of flour and sugar and ghi, fresh from the griddle, that burn your fingers as you eat them; and lastly, wondrous ration cigarettes.

You must eat even if you are not hungry, for refusal would be almost discourtesy.

Squatting down in front, he proceeds to inquire after the regiment, news of the column, prospects of ending the show, and then — burning question with all ranks from Generals downwards — "what about leave?" The magic word brings others to collect round in the hopes of hearing something good.

The Force Commander's promise of early leave having been repeated and names called for in anticipation, polite inquiries are addressed on your behalf as being obviously a stranger in the land, since helmets and ties and gaiters are uncommon in this land of fancy dress.

"What is the Sahib's regiment?"

"The Norfolks! A good lot, yes," says the havildar reminiscently. He had fought side by side with them from Basra to Ctesiphon, which the Indian soldier, being evidently like many others defeated by the conjunct consonant, refers to as Sulaiman Pak.

"Where was the Sahib wounded?"

Apparently at Kurna, another bond of union, for the havildar's brother had taken it badly there, though he himself got off with one through the pagri.

And so the conversation drifts on, and more and more people join in.

"How do they like picquet life?"

Well, it's getting a little boring now, and a spell of camp would be welcome, though at first after weeks of continual marching, climbing, digging, and fighting it was a blissful rest. It's peaceful enough except for occasional sniping; but, they repeat, a change would be appreciated, especially a change to "India"— the word is absolutely vernacular nowadays,—say Belgaum or Ahmadnagar for two or three years!!!

We get up and stroll round outside the picquet, where the signallers sit winking their helio at the next camp. The Mahsud has developed a fondness for telephone wire and takes away hundreds of yards every night, so that the signallers, nominally there for intercommunication between picquets, come in handy to relieve the congestion on the wireless when the cables are out.

The hills lie shimmering in the sun, grey, hazy, bush-strewn masses, slashed with the Indian-red shadows of nullahs. All is sleepy and drowsy, save where below your feet the long series of tiny moving khaki dots show the convoy on its way. Adolphus & Co. have ceased from sniping, and the only sound is the far-off high-pitched drone of an unseen 'plane winging its way home from a bombing raid. To the north-west shows Pir Ghal, a mass

of cobalt flecked with the last few traces of snow.

A stir round the signallers' telescope draws attention.

"Mahsuds? Real live ones?"

The group makes way, and you squat down and glue your eye to the eye-piece, and sure enough, there in the village across the nullah, 1600 yards away, are three lurking figures, dressed in ragged garments, grey with dirt, each man with a rifle and cartridge-belt. You watch them shambling about, and presently they stop, standing together at the edge of a field.

The Lewis gunner looks imploringly at you. Feeling the occasion demands something, you say half-heartedly "Right-oh! just a burst," or the vernacular equivalent of same.

He dashes into the picquet, and a few seconds later—"Br-r-rrrrr."

One of the dirty figures drops flat, and the other two bolt into a bush-covered depression. You hope for the best, but the range is long, and before the next burst rings out the prostrate figure wriggles a couple of yards into the lee of a stone wall, and is gone.

However, it's probably frightened them, and the Lewis gunner is of course convinced that the man *must* have been wounded.

Silence settles down on the landscape again, and presently bidding farewell to our hosts, we slither down the loose stone hillside to the river-bed. The down convoy has just passed when we reach our ponies, a man with a red flag on a camel at the rear, whose job is to be last of every one—gathering in laggards, and "helping the lazhy ones on with the shtick."

The advance-guard commander, now converted into the rearguard commander, gathers up his men, hoists a large coloured flag carried by a runner, and signals in his further picquet, who come tumbling headlong down the slope. The main point in withdrawing off a hill is to do it fast, and only those who have tried it can realise the difficulty of running in full equipment down a steep hillside covered with loose shale.

It is a slow process going home, because it generally means a halt below each permanent picquet to gather up a water party, or a pioneer officer inspecting defences, or a relief, or a doctor looking for flies.

A party of pioneers making stepping-stones across the streams has to be collected, and then a belated trio of telephone linesmen have to be waited for, for the rearguard commander is responsible that no one is left out.

As I said, we do *not* hold Waziristan; the Mahsud merely permits us the use of the Tank Zam for such of the hours of daylight as we choose to put a sufficiency of rifles along its edges.

As the picqueting troops trek homeward, the river-bed and the hills grow quiet once more, the last parties of bathers scurry up to their picquets, and

the long stony expanse of occasionally meadow-dotted river-bed lies empty again till the morrow,—empty save for the jackals and the prowling parties of Mahsuds, who come down by night to water their fields, cut the telephone cables, and snipe the piequets or the camps.

"Tick . . . took — Tick . . . took."

Adolphus is saying farewell to the rearguard, and emphasising the fact that fifty army corps moving up the river-bed won't alter the essential fact that for the greater part of the twenty-four hours it is entirely Mahsud property.

CHAPTER IV.—PUTTING UP A PICQUET.

The hills north-east of Kotkai lay bathed in sunshine — grey bush-sprinkled hills, with stunted patches of broom among the outcrops of black rock.

Along the skyline moved now and then little squat topi-crowned figures—a company of Garhwalis, forming part of the covering troops.

In front the ground dipped sharply into a deep nullah, mostly madder-brown rocks, up which ran the thin beaten thread of a Mahsud path. Below again to the left lay the bed of the Tank Zam, a glaring expanse of white stones.

Across the nullah the ground rose again, ridge after ridge of rock, to where, pinnacled against the blue northern sky, a sharp-cut jagged mass of stone, "White Rocks," closed the horizon. Between White Rocks and the near nullah, blurs of khaki and grey and brown, with flickers of light from bayonets and tin position-discs, the bulk of the covering troops were spread out in little groups, cuddled for the most part in hastily-built sangars.

Every few moments a shot or two would ring out in front, sometimes the harmless "pop . . . pop" of friendly rifles, sometimes the "ta . . . pong" of the enemy rifle fired towards one; and occasionally high overhead came the song of a passing bullet.

The Pioneer officer — short, round-faced, dapper, resplendent in topi and much-polished brass buttons—was conferring with the brigade-major and the infantry subaltern. The question before the house was the one of siting and building a new picquet. The general locality had been settled the previous day; the point at issue now was the exact spot where it should be placed.

Behind the trio, under cover, a company of pioneers, each man with pick or shovel or mamootie, *anglicè* hoe, slung in leather slings on his back, were unloading bundles of stakes, coils of wire, packs of sandbags from the mules, while an infantry working-party was busy collecting stones in heaps.

A handful of red-fringed "Suffering Miners," as the sappers and miners, Indian

equivalent of R.E. field companies, are locally known, were standing by, with mauls and wire-cutters, awaiting orders to begin work.

"This is the spot every time," said the brigade-major. "You've got dead ground on the left, but you can't have everything in this world."

"What about putting it a shade more to the left and covering that patch?"

Thus the infantryman in fancy war-dress — "dickie" turban sewn around a double thickness kullah, with a brown jersey, from which protruded the open collar of a *recherché* flannel shirt.

"And lose that bit of nullah on the right?"

"I'd rather lose that and keep an eye on the river-bed," replied the foot-soldier crossly.

The Pioneer intervened to keep the peace.

"Why not build a thin oval picquet, and cover both bits?" said he sagely.

"Can do," replied the subaltern, "and we'd better hurry, 'cos time's getting on, and Musa and his brave 'Abdullas,' as the press gent calls 'em, know that with our present programme they can bet on tools being downed by three pip emma signal time."

The Pioneer waved up a havildar and a couple of men with a tracing-tape, and laid it down in an irregular oval around the site of the picquet. Then, calling up two platoons of his company, he set them to work building a stone wall round the tape. Waziristan consists for the most part of bare rock with occasional pockets of earth in the river-bed, and, consequently, the soldier's most valued friend is not the good old sanguinary shovel, but rather a crowbar, with which he may prise up chunks of rock, and a sledge-hammer wherewith to break up the said chunks into convenient sizes for building "sangars," as the stone breastworks which replace trenches are called.

Some levered out rocks, others built them up into a wall on the line that the Pioneer officer had marked out, others again filled the interstices between the bigger stones by pouring in sandbags full of rubble. The sappers got to work, crowbarring holes into the rock, and driving in six-foot stakes, while another platoon of pioneers followed them with coils of barbed wire linking up the stakes.

Below them more pioneers passed up the stones the infantry had collected, and the infantry working-party, who were to occupy the picquet when built, shovelled earth and small stones into sandbags for dear life. You can't make decent loopholes or head-cover with stones only, and a plain stone wall with no sandbag top means showers of splinters to accompany each bullet—splinters that fly off just about the level of your eyes.

The desultory rifle fire in front and to the right continued, varied occasionally by a burst or two of Lewis gun fire. The stone wall grew inch by inch until it was perhaps two feet high, and the wire fence round had now got its full four strands of wire

just in front, although to the right a bad rock outcrop had slowed work and twenty yards that side were as yet bare of stakes.

The Pioneer looked at his wrist-watch.

"Well up to time to-day, anyway, and no sniping to speak of, thank God."

The words were barely out of his mouth when the desultory firing going on seven hundred yards away where the line of covering troops bent back along a crest-line to the right changed to a steady rattle mingled with the burst of bombs.

The infantryman put up his glasses and scanned the skyline whence the noise came and the puffs of smoke marked the bursting bombs.

"'Struth! They're coming back! Hurry up with those stones, and get some bags up quick."

He shrieked out an order in Hindustani, and the infantry below dropped their tools and started handing up the filled bags they had dumped ready.

Sure enough there was an ominous backward kink in the line, and as they watched the kink stretched and broke, and a cluster of leaping figures in loose dirty garments showed for an instant against the sky ere they dropped and melted into the rocks and bushes where the covering troops had been.

"Whit . . . whit . . . whit . . . whit . . . plonk"; a pioneer dropped across the stone he was trying to lift and lay still, a huddled mass of twitching limbs.

"Whit . . . whit . . . phutt . . . ping . . . whit whit . . . plomp." Another dropped the coil of wire he was carrying and stood open-mouthed, holding his arm foolishly, watching the blood spurting from his elbow.

"Get that wall up quick!" yelled the pioneer, and called on the party below to push up sandbags as fast as they could.

The men inside, crouching under the low wall, feverishly piled up the bags in front of them as the bullets spat viciously past, splintering on the rocks or splashing into lead stars on the stones of the wall.

A sapper, trying vainly to drive a stake in the gap on that vulnerable side, sat down heavily with the blood soaking through the knee of his trousers.

"Ta . . . pong . . . whit . . . whit . . . zip . . . plonk . . . ping . . . plonk."

The sapper rolled over and tried to crawl painfully into cover. Two big Punjabi sepoys leapt out of the picquet, fell on him, and hauled him down the slope, regardless until, losing their footing, the three rolled pantingly into a thornbush and comparative safety. Whereafter they picked up the wounded man, brought him in to where the mules stood, and, handing him over to the stretcher-bearers to tie up and take home out of the way, carried on passing up bags once more.

"Phutt . . . ping . . . whit . . . whit zip . . . plonk . . . zip zip."

The infantryman was adjuring his struggling soldiery in a string of picturesque oaths in three different languages to

get a move on with the sand-bags, the brigade-major had gone off at a run to hurry the supporting troops up to retake the broken bit of the line, and the pioneer officer was disconsolately sucking an unlighted cigarette.

"We'll never get it done at this rate," moaned he as he sheltered under the lee of the half-built wall and fumbled in his pocket for a match. "B——!" and removed from his eye a chunk of Waziristan thrown in by a ricochetting bullet.

"Why in God's name can't they shove in a counter-attack instead of sitting there shooting into the blue like a lot of stuffed owls!" He turned round: "Hi, you sapper havildar, get up a concertina and we'll pull it across the front."

Two sappers came up with a concertina of barbed wire, that refuge of the destitute when excess of fire prevents one putting up a proper belt. A well-made concertina pulls out as fast as a man can run, so all you have to do is to tie one end to a stake, hold the other, and chancing your luck bolt across the danger-space, and lo! behind you springs out of nothing the ghost of a wire fence.

"Whit . . . whit . . . zip . . . brrr."

"Thank God! there they go," said the subaltern. A double line of infantry emerged from cover below the point now occupied by the enemy and advanced at a slow double up the hundred yards or so of hillside, while behind and to their flank Lewis guns, several by the noise, yelped cheerfully. Covering fire evidently.

The dip in front was veiled an instant by the smoke of bursting rifle bombs, and as the "zip-zip" of bullets ceased around the picquet, the sappers hauled their concertina across the gap, and infantry and pioneers swarmed over the wall again in response to the pioneer officer's blasphemous entreaties to build again from both sides as before.

The subaltern put down his glasses.

"And that's *that!* Hi, stretcher-bearers!" and told them to get away the wounded quickly, and after them the dead. The picquet was cramped enough without having dead and wounded lying about, and also one doesn't want to have any one extra to carry down when the withdrawal begins. Your stretcher-bearers can generally find enough to do then with the fresh cases, and don't want to be hampered with "arrears," so to speak.

The line in front was re-established, parties of stretcher-bearers were moving up to the re-occupied crest-line, and the Lewis gun fire had died away once more, leaving only the intermittent "pop . . . pop" of the rifles.

The wall grew again slowly, inch by inch. "Keep 'em going on the far side first. Then if they snipe again we shall have some cover while we're running up the rear wall," said the infantryman.

"Right-oh," replied the pioneer; "I'm watching that."

"Bas abhi—buri lagado."

The wall was nearly four feet high now, and the first layer of sandbags went on, a cushion to keep down flying splinters.

"Now loopholes, Jemadar Sahib—jaldi."

"Tell your blokes to hurry with more sandbags, Jones, and some more stones for that rear wall."

A pioneer havildar and two men clambered atop of the wall and started building sandbag loopholes, topped with stakes to carry another tier or two of bags as head cover. The sappers were away once more putting an apron of wire on to the front of the upright fence, and thickening up the concertina with loose rolls and coils of rusty barbed wire.

"Another hour and a half to go," said the Pioneer, consulting his watch again. "Hope to God they don't rush the covering troops," and leapt off to hurry the platoon now piling up the rear wall of the picquet.

. . . . . .

Out in front of the picquet three-quarters of a mile or so, Major Miles, in charge of one of the covering battalions, lay in the shelter of a rock chewing a cigarette-holder and consulting his watch from time to time.

Just below him under the slope sat his jemadar-adjutant, four or five red-armletted runners, and a party of signallers squatting to a helio. The doctor was busy with some stretcher cases farther away to the right. Three hundred yards or so in front lay two of his companies stretching out to either flank, thin lines of men scattered in twos and threes among the rocks, here and there a Lewis gun cuddled cunningly into a patch of shadow.

Still farther below him in the head of a small nullah sat his reserve company in column. The remaining company, "D", had been thrown in on the right to take charge of that weak spot where the enemy had broken in earlier in the day, and where reports said they were still collecting.

In front stretched the stony brown hillside, shimmering in the sunlight, the quavering air dancing above the trembling rocks, for even in winter the Waziristan sun is warm at midday in clear weather.

At intervals bullets flicked past—"Whit . . . whit . . . . ping," and all the while, now from the left, now from the right, but always more insistently from the right, came the intermittent rattle of musketry mingled with the short staccato bursts of Lewis gun fire, and the occasional thudding crash of bombs.

Major Miles' thin, pleasant, sunburnt face, with its close-clipped reddish moustache and big frank grey eyes, was deep in thought, for he was cogitating over his plan of withdrawal. Putting up a picquet is not like the more lasting type of warfare where you get a locality and keep it. Covering troops for picquet building occupy a bit of ground with the deliberate idea of abandoning it again when the picquet is established, or perhaps at some definite preordained time—*e.g.*, as on this occasion at 3 P.M.

The Mahsud, being no fool, knows that it is far better to fight a retiring enemy than one advancing, since in the former case *he* will pick up the casualties instead of us. Wherefore the covering troops generally get their ground for a few shots. But once they have settled in and work on the picquet has started, the Mahsud watching from the higher hills around, starts in to make his dispositions with the eye of a born tactician. He studies the probable lines of withdrawal, and while his "shook troops" proceed by devious routes to mass out of view against some weak or ill-guarded spot which he will rush, if and when opportunity offers, either to break up the day's programme or to harass the retirement, the rest of his forces disperse in a cloud of marksmen to snipe methodically all over the line, and throw in a minor attack or two if chance offers.

Normally the wretched covering troops are the people who have to suffer all day, but sometimes in really bad country the picquet can be sniped as well, despite the covering troops, and then the Mahsud's cup of joy is indeed full.

So to-day the "do soh wunjahs" lay out in the sun for the nth time, listened to the unseen enemy's bullets whimpering past as he unceasingly tormented them, made themselves small behind rocks, and prayed for three o'clock when they could at least get up and run home instead of lying out in the open as targets for the Mahsud with nothing whatever to do unless he chose to attack.

At intervals the guns from below would pitch a shell or two over them on to the higher slopes beyond, and once a circling 'plane drifted over dropping bombs. This was always welcome, because the moment a 'plane came over you could sit up and stretch your arms and legs, secure in the knowledge that Brer Mahsud would be spread-eagled down motionless, with his nose well into the dust, until such time as the 'plane had passed. The tribesmen long ago learnt to take cover at the sight of 'planes, their indescribably grimy garments harmonising well with the landscape; and nowadays on an ordinary stony hillside it's like putting a hawk over partridge—they just cower, although in bush they can still sit up and shoot.

Miles reflected as the passing Bristol gave him an opportunity to stand up in comfort and look around, that if there were only enough machines you could sit up all the time, and better still, suffer few, if any, casualties.

His attention for the present, however, was mainly concentrated on the best method of withdrawing his men at the witching hour of 3 P.M., or in modern military parlance, "fifteen hours."

There would most certainly be trouble; the enemy had been more than usually attentive to-day, even to the extent of rushing that bad place on the right, where a thickly-bushed nullah gave them an easy way up, a bit of ground, moreover, quite out of reach

of the guns, owing to the steep angle of the slope.

That must, he had settled, be the last bit to be withdrawn, because otherwise it would enfilade the whole of the rest of his line as they came back. On the other hand, since the enemy could get to within fifty yards, practically out of sight, the moment the troops there *did* fall back they would be properly "hotted." Yes, it would most certainly be lively.

He had sent the adjutant over to see how things were going now, and to explain once more the exact scheme of withdrawal to the Company Commander. He looked at his watch—"2.15." Another three-quarters of an hour to go. Turning round, he called up the reserve company commander, and went through his dispositions again.

"When I give you the signal, fall back across the dip and take up your position along the ridge. They'll probably come on like stink to-day, so tell your men to keep their eyes well skinned and shoot quick and straight.

"Let every one know that A and B go straight through you to the line of rocks above the nullah, and you'll be called back from there. Above all, watch your right, and keep touch with D Company."

He inserted a "scissors" cigarette into his much-chewed holder, and lit it, then took his glasses.

"Look at the dirty blighters on that hill there! Fids of 'em! Here, signaller! Message pad!"

He scribbled a message and sent it off, and five minutes later heard the howitzers in the river speak. Then, following the whistling sound of the shell, saw the peak in front veil in smoke, as the H.E. burst on it, "one—two—three—four."

"Damn!"

The lurking figures had also heard the sound, and ere the shells burst, had vanished out of sight — one re-appearing defiantly to wave a "washout" with his filthy turban.

"Still, it'll worry 'em."

The adjutant came back up the slope.

"Browne's ready, sir. They're still collecting there. He says you can hear them below in the bushes; but you can't see a d——d thing, and any one who pokes his head up overlong gets it. He's had twelve casualties in the last hour."

"Got 'em all away?" queried Miles.

"All the wounded have started down. If the stretchers get back in time and aren't wanted for more wounded, he'll try to get the dead away too; but I doubt his doing it. It's a real bad place."

The crash of bursting bombs broke into the conversation, and all three looked to the right again.

"He's bombing now. They must be getting pretty close. Look at the smoke."

Several more bombs exploded, and a steady rattle of rifle and Lewis gun fire broke out and then died away again.

Major Miles stared long through his glasses, and then put them down again. No low bullets had come over

from that side anyway, which meant that the enemy was being kept well below the crest-line. Also he could see Browne walking about in rear of the firing line, presumably just under cover; and once he caught a glimpse of Williams, Browne's company officer, conspicuously pink and white among the bearded Sikhs.

He looked at his watch again—2.40.

"Get all the mules down, Little," he said to the adjutant. "The Mahsud path in the nullah, you know, and then straight back to camp. We'll have to carry the guns, of course."

Little went down into the hollow and started the first-line mules away, and they disappeared down the winding track to the river-bed.

A signal message came up from Brigade H.Q. to tell the "do soh wunjahs" to retire at "fifteen hours." Then another from the picquet itself to say that they were ready. Miles crumpled the message into his haversack and rose to his feet.

"'Way you go, Smith. Get into position as quick as you can and then wait for me."

. . . . . .

"Time's up, Jones," said the Pioneer Officer, looking round the picquet. "You'd better get all your kits and stores in—we shall have to go in a minute."

The picquet walls were finished as regards stone-work, and one side had loopholes and some head cover. The remaining sides were as yet bare of loopholes, but dumps of filled sandbags lay around inside, which the picquet themselves could build later.

The inner belt of wire was finished and the stakes of the outer one, and a few strands of wire in position.

It was by no means the finished article, but it was a picquet that determined men could hold, and if not worried too much could improve considerably by nightfall. In any case there was all round cover from fire provided you kept low, and there was one good belt of wire.

"I'll leave all the wire here inside the inner belt, and when you get a peaceful hour during the next day or two you can get on with the outer one yourself."

"Right-oh," said the subaltern, and shouted to his men to stop work and get in all the stores as quickly as they could. The pioneers broke off and filed away down to the mules to pack up their tools and stores.

The infantry came straggling up the slope with boxes of ammunition, of hand and rifle grenades, sacks of rations and tins of ghi, which they dumped into the picquet. Then off again down the slope for a second and yet a third trip to bring up their blankets and greatcoats, cooking pots and firewood.

The Lewis gun team established itself in an emplacement looking towards that danger-spot on the right, two rifle bombers settled near them, while some signallers fixed up a telephone on to the wire they had laid previously and brought in their helio and lamp.

The water party emptied the last pakhals of water into the canvas tanks they had placed in the picquet, and departed for home with their string of mules in the wake of the pioneers, who were starting down the long sloping ridge back towards the river, dead ground to the enemy at present.

As the last loads were thrown into the picquet, the subaltern signalled to the O.C. covering troops in front that the picquet was ready. A few minutes later he saw their reserve company move down towards him and deploy into line on one of the nearer ridges. He put as many men as he could fit along the north and east faces of the picquet, and set every one else to pile up rough head cover of sandbags as quickly as they could on the unfinished walls. There was a good deal of noise on the right. Evidently the enemy were getting impatient.

Five, ten, fifteen minutes passed—the walls on the rear faces were mostly topped now with piled sandbags built into rough notches.

Suddenly the foremost line of covering troops in front started to run back, and from away below he heard the guns, and the bursting shell leaped into life in front. The covering troops were withdrawing all right now. On they came, passed through the reserve company at a steady double and took up a position on the edge of the nullah in front of him, while the reserve company broke into a rattle of rifle fire. The fire to the right redoubled, and the dull reverberations of bombs broke on the air, accompaniment to the "phutt-phutt" of the white-wreathed shrapnel ahead.

Four laden stretchers passed him looking downwards. Then the reserve company, now become the foremost line, started coming away in bunches of swift-moving men, and just as these reached the nullah the remainder came away, running fast now. Once a man dropped. The men nearest halted, flung themselves round and opened fire, and two seized the prostrate figure, heaved it up and stumbled onwards again, the bullets spattering the rocks around them and the dragging figure with the hanging head. But they stumbled into cover where A and B Companies had spread out, and the rest of the group came after them spread out, and running fast, heads down, as men run in heavy rain or hail.

Major Miles came up with his runners and signallers near the picquet and called up the people on the right, whence two more stretchers were coming away followed by a couple of walking wounded.

The fire from in front was growing heavier, and bullets splashed continually against the picquet wall. A runner dashed up to the major with a message. Reading it, he turned to the adjutant.

"Tell A Company they'll have to hang on a bit. Browne's got some more casualties to get away and no more stretchers. Send him up all you can find."

The adjutant rushed off, and presently three men went off carrying a blanket stretcher apiece, disappearing into the bushes near the crest-line where Browne's company lay, to reappear again five minutes later, four men to each sagging stretcher.

Farther away on the right flank a dumpy little Garhwali hove into sight carrying a wounded man on his back. Evidently stretchers were running short up there too. The little man stumbled slowly along, and presently dropped his burden and straightened himself, then, squatting down, hoisted the wounded man on to his back, and so onward again slowly. Then they fell all of a heap, and the watching subaltern thought the rescuer was hit; but no, he scrambled to his feet again, hoisted up his burden once more, and so away down the loose shale slope past the picquet, down the path into safety.

You can't leave your wounded pals out to be cut up by Mahsuds if anything humanly possible can be done to get them away.

A signal flag flickered, and the company across the nullah fell back and joined the line by the picquet. A rush of dirty grey-clad figures showed for an instant across the nullah, and vanished again as the whole line burst into fire.

"Now for it," said Miles to himself as he gave the signal for Browne's company to come away.

The first half of them emerged from the bushes below the crest and made for the picquet, a little group in the centre dragging along a wounded man. The supporting troops on the right of the picquet opened rapid fire as the remainder of the company came leaping over the loose slipping stones down the hill at top speed, the rear brought up by an Indian officer with two dead men's rifles, and Browne himself, revolver in hand.

A rush of enemy whirled over the skyline behind them; the picquet Lewis gun yapped out, and a second later a salvo of shells burst round about the enemy, and as the smoke cleared away some of them could be seen tearing back with long strides over the skyline, three or four carrying either their own wounded or our dead to strip under cover. The gunners below were watching: "Bang — bang — wheuuu —crump . . . cr-r-rrump."

But as Browne came in, Miles asked "Where's Williams?"

"Out there," said Browne. "Got it through the neck over the hill—five men killed and three wounded trying to pull him in. Had to leave him in the end — stone-dead, thank God." Browne's face was very white and grim.

The major swallowed twice before he spoke. Williams was Browne's best friend. "D— sorry, old man. You take your company straight down and out now. They won't follow beyond the picquet and we've plenty of people here. Tell your men they've put up a d—d good show."

Browne saluted and tramped mechanically away to where his Sikhs were collecting under cover. They looked tired, a little dazed too, many of them; several had two rifles, eloquent signs of the day's casualties.

As he passed the picquet he saw the subaltern standing by the door.

"Keep the filthy brutes off the ridge if you can, Jones. We've got several men lying out. Poor old Billy's there."

"God! I'm sorry," said Jones. "We'll do our best."

Browne fell-in his company and marched off down the hill. The fire had slackened in front now, but the enemy, foiled of further advance, sniped steadily from the cover on the right, "smack—smack—smack," on the picquet walls, and once one of the picquet crumpled up slowly at his loophole, to slide inertly to the ground in a pool of frothy blood.

The drone of an aeroplane sounded overhead: "Cr-r-rump—or-r-ump—or-r-rump—o-r-rump," followed by the prolonged chatter of a Lewis gun. The ground fire died away, and the Garhwali company on the flank fell back quietly in line with the rest.

The remaining wounded were despatched homewards, and then, platoon by platoon, the covering troops followed towards camp. The infantry subaltern watched them go, and then turned into the picquet. The men along the N.-E. face were firing intermittently into the bushes five hundred yards away, where occasional enemy figures showed, but all was over bar the shouting.

The day's work was finished satisfactorily, another picquet built and held, another half-mile of the road made good—as usual, at a price—while some of those who had paid it lay out in the rocks and bushes yonder, where the watching Mahsuds prowled, waiting for night to enable them to gather in something for their day's labour. They might attack the picquet at night—Jones half hoped they would—his wire was passably strong, and he would lay out some of the swine. "Poor old Billy!"

Later the darkness came down, and the men in the new picquet stood to arms at their firing-places, tensely alert, and heard the Mahsuds calling to one another, and once for a while the voice of a wounded man calling, calling, until it suddenly stopped.

The Very lights curved heavenwards, throwing great black shadows and vivid white radiance over the hillside; and from time to time the spattering crackle of rifle fire and the burst of bombs told the camp down-stream that "X" picquet was still holding good.

But Browne lay wide-eyed in the dark in his little 40-lb. tent thinking of Billy as he last saw him and of all the past years they had spent together, while a bitter black hatred against the hand of Fate seethed in his heart as he listened to the distant shots and thought of the enemy's ghoulish movements that drew them.

(To be continued.)

THE FAGS' APPEAL TO GOD.

BY C. R. L. FLETCHER.

MOST people who have visited the magnificent seventeenth-century quadrangle at Braningham School know that the famous Fags' Dormitory, commonly abbreviated into "Fags' Dor," or "Fags," lies on the left hand of the great gate, and on the first floor. Over the gateway itself is the Common-room of the Sixth-form boys, and beyond that, to the right of the gate, the studies and bed-chambers of the same Olympian personages. These rooms together fill up the western wing of the quadrangle. At right angles to "Fags," and forming the southern wing, come the three successive "dors" of the Lower, Middle, and Upper Fifth-form boys, and each "dor" communicates with the ground-floor by its own staircase; while the northern and eastern wings of the quadrangle are occupied by the Chapel, the Schoolhouse dining-hall, sundry schoolrooms, and the entrance to the Cloister Garth. Part of the ground-floor of the southern wing is taken up by the private rooms of the Master of the Schoolhouse, familiarly known as "Schoolhouse Cad"—for the Headmaster, who is by right head of the Schoolhouse, lives in dignified state in a private house beyond Cloister Garth, and keeps a "cad" to perform for him the duty of looking after the hundred boys who inhabit the Schoolhouse. My readers will be kind enough to note that the word "cad" is not used in any offensive sense; in school phrase it merely means "one who performs the work of another"—a Regent would be described at Braningham as "a King's cad." Mr Snow, or "Snorkins," the "cad" at the time of my tale, was a wise and popular master.

The interior arrangements of the four great dormitories are all upon the same plan: on one side of each is a row of little divisions with desks, not unlike the "toys" at Winchester, and on the other side a corresponding number of beds, washstands, and chests of drawers; curtains supported on iron pillars conceal the row of beds in the daytime. In the centre on each side is a gap, and in these gaps stand, opposite to each other, a large fireplace and coal-box, and a large baize-covered table, with a few battered basket-chairs, which can always be carried across to the fireside. In "Fags," at least, whatever may be the custom in Lower, Middle, and Upper "Dors," it is in this central space that the twenty occupants do chiefly congregate. There *la basse justice* is administered (with the back of a long-handled bath-brush, the victim kneeling with his trousers tight on

the ancient coal-box) by the captain of fags; there the events of the day are discussed after evening school, cricket or football sides are made up, and plots are hatched. It is the Delphi, the ὀμφαλός of fagdom, the centre of its earth.

One of the first rules at the Schoolhouse is that no fag may, *proprio motu*, enter Lower, still less Middle or Upper Fifth "dors." It might almost be called an unnecessary rule, for no fag is likely to wish to enter those abodes of savage men, nor ever does so save when he is sent thither with a message by one of his lawful masters of the Sixth form; then, indeed, he is protected by privilege, and his person is as sacred as that of a herald in mediæval, or an ambassador in modern, times: it would be the actual duty of a fag to sneak (indeed it would not be sneaking at all) if any Fifth-form boy laid hands on him while he was so fagging. A less easily upheld rule is that no Fifth-form boy might come into "Fags"; for, although standing at right angles to it, "Lower" is only separated from "Fags" by a narrow space into which open two little rooms inhabited by specimens of that strange sex known as Schoolmaids;[1] in odd half-hours in the summer, when all doors are open and dormitory cricket in full swing, a ball from "Lower" is quite apt to cannon off into "Fags," and will then usually be retrieved without scruple. "Fags" may not retrieve a ball from "Lower."

In truth, the enforcement of rules of this kind depends on the wisdom and strength of Sixth form; there have been times not so far back in the history of the Schoolhouse—there was, in fact, such a time when my tale begins—when the boys from "Lower" would invade "Fags" in force, oust the lawful occupants from the seats by their own fireplace, and generally run riot. That was because the Olympians slept, and such invasion was always intensely resented by the little boys.

With their own lawful masters the relation of the occupants of "Fags" was much more cordial. As is well known, there are always twenty Sixth, and always twenty fags, a serf to each master. It is essentially a prædial serfdom, not a slavery: the labour-rents are not heavy, are fixed to definite hours, and cannot be increased *ad voluntatem domini*. Custom, the one real sovereign of all primitive and barbarous communities, is the surest protection of the fag. The Sixth may go into "Fags" at all hours of the day, and indeed it is their duty (very ill-performed as a rule, for they treat it as a supreme bore) to patrol it occasionally. Each fag has also his appointed duties to perform in his master's own study and in

[1] The office is hereditary in certain families; the qualifications are great bodily strength and great taciturnity; their names are always either Sarah or Marah or Maria.

the Sixth Common-room, and some kind masters have even allowed good fags to take occasional refuge in their studies and do their lessons there.

"Fags," then, is, or should be, by tradition one of the most privileged places of the School, and it is immensely conscious of the value of its privileges; though it possesses neither charter nor seal, it almost regards itself as a corporate body. As all students of mediæval antiquities know, there are associations of men who by long prescription "acquire the aspects" of corporations, and are very apt to act as if they really were such. Whether they can sue and be sued is a point which even the late F. W. Maitland had hardly been able to determine. I shall now endeavour to shew how my heroes went so far as to claim this last great privilege of corporate bodies, and how it came to be granted to them by the highest earthly authority which they acknowledged.

At the beginning of the Great War, "Fags," which claimed that it actually had more fathers fighting than any other dormitory could boast, felt a great patriotic impulse sweep through its veins, and one form which this impulse took was the collection of money for the "Comforts Fund" of the local hospital. Similar collections were begun in all the dormitories, and there was a good deal of praiseworthy rivalry between these. Before the end of the winter term of 1914, all except one of these collections had been merged in a Schoolhouse collection, to which each "dor" made its weekly contribution. "Fags" alone stoutly refused any suggestion of such merger—"We began the idea, and we are going to carry it on on our own,"—and it insisted on carrying its contribution, by the hands of the captain of fags, to the actual hands of the matron of the hospital at the end of each term. How far this stout attitude on the part of the little boys was influenced by the fact that the matron almost always kept the little contributor to tea with her, and gave him what he described as a "buck feed," it is not for me to say, but it is a fact that successive captains usually managed to bring their contributions to her at about 4.30 P.M. on the last Saturday of each term.

Now in all schools, as most of us know, the line between a voluntary contribution and a forced levy is obscure and easily overstepped. "Fags" had unanimously voted on September 21, 1914, that half its weekly shillings, *plus* half the money each fag brought from home at the beginning of the term, *plus* half of any tips that might be acquired during the term, should be contributed to this Comforts Fund. Successive captains of fags had rigorously enforced this rule until the end of the year 1917. Once or twice there were small skulkers who had failed to

pay, but after a public execution of one such skulker, detected in endeavouring to conceal a "Bradbury" which a wounded uncle had given him, there had been no further trouble. The independence of "Fags" in this matter was well known all over the Schoolhouse, the wise Olympians approved it, and persuaded the Schoolhouse "cad" not only to approve but to undertake the terminal audit of the accounts of the fags' collection as well as of the House collection. The keeping of those accounts, and the safe-keeping of the cash (locked in his own desk), were matters which were ill or well performed according (*a*) to the arithmetical capacity, (*b*) to the strength of character, of the captain of fags for the time being.

In the year 1917 there was undoubtedly much war-weariness, not only in the nation but even in that heart of all that was best in the nation, the Schoolhouse at Braningham. There were a lot of temporary masters, some of whom had not even been Braningham boys—"Squills" they were called (Heaven alone knows the etymology of the word),—and they kept little order. Field-days and drills had been multiplied *ad nauseam* and became an abomination to most boys. The Sixth were listless, their own time to go and be killed drawing ever nearer, and the Fifth got out of hand. The Lower Fifth had always been a tough lot, for it was in this form that stupid or idle boys most commonly stuck, sometimes until they were seventeen,—at which age they would be superannuated and dismissed from the School if they had not passed into Middle. And there were now no boys in the School over the age of eighteen. There was a spirit of rebellion abroad, occasionally rising almost into mutiny, against sacred traditions and sacred privileges. Bolshevism cast its shadow before on some of the idle Fifth form, who took to reading Mr G. B. Shaw and mistaking the slime which he spreads over his paper for humour. Some boy brought back a copy of a book called 'The Boom of Youth,' and it was greedily devoured in Lower Dor, which began to model its language upon that used by the characters in that astonishing work.

The first sufferers by this state of things were naturally the fags. Neither as a corporate body nor as individuals had they previously been distinguished for piety or for immaculate language; but when they heard their own natural enemies in Lower Dor begin the practice of swearing at large in season and out of season, in imitation of Mr Faugh's heroes, they naturally adopted the opposite course, and set a bridle upon their tongues. Indeed, it was gravely discussed in "Fags" whether a set of penny fines for each oath should not be imposed; but the state of complete impecuniosity to which the subscriptions to the Comforts Funds had reduced the

dormitory, seems to have caused this counsel of perfection to be rejected. Yet it was carried that a series of euphemisms should be, as far as possible, adopted, so that you might hear a small boy who had been badly shinned at football exclaim "bad words" with great fervour; and for what is perhaps the most common of schoolboy terms of abuse or endearment, you were now supposed to call your friend "a four-letter man."[1]

The fags, however, suffered, during the weakness of the Sixth and the increasing toughness of the Fifth, worse things than shocks to their ears. "Lower" interfered with them in all sorts of ways from morning till night, and some of its worst specimens might be said to have been in almost continuous occupation of the comfortable corners in "Fags," whose members they harried with exquisite torments, such as those employed, according to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, by the wicked barons of the reign of King Stephen.

In these circumstances it was often difficult for the captain of fags to wrestle at his desk with the weekly accounts of the Fund. Some big ruffian from "Lower" would come and look over his shoulder and commence an imaginary audit, or would snatch up the little dirty thumbed account-book, carry it off to his cronies by the fire, and read aloud the contributions of the various members of "Fags" for weeks past. The collection in "Lower" itself (and it must be confessed in other parts of the School also) had been steadily dwindling for several terms past: except in "Fags" it had always been voluntary, and so had been much more irregular. "Lower" were a hungrier lot than "Fags"; their table in Hall was not, or they asserted that it was not, so well-fed, so they needed to buy more sausage-rolls to stay their stomachs. They played fives, and some of them even played that very expensive game racquets: whereas "Fags," by long tradition, had always devoted its own fierce energies to but three games—football in the winter term, cross-country runs, called "grinds," in the Lent, and cricket in the summer; and none of these demanded any immediate outlay of money, their expenses being charged in "home-bills." It was, however, not without resentment that "Lower" knew (and "Fags," which had its own share of self-righteousness and original sin, took care that it should continue to know) that the contribution from the youngest dormitory in the House maintained the high and even tenor of its original way. "These young scoundrels had grown most abominably insolent over it," thought (and said with many a blanky blank) Mr Williamson, Captain

[1] This was perhaps an adaptation of the well-known Latin euphemism for "fur" (a thief)—namely, "homo trium litterarum."

of "Lower" in the Lent Term of 1918, "it was time to read them a good lesson; it made him sick when he took his contribution (without an account-book) to Snorkins at the end of last term to hear Snorkins praise the fags for their steady regularity," and so on. To cut a long story short, it may have been Williamson, or it may have been some other big boy in "Lower," from whom the devilish suggestion emanated, that "Fags" should be compelled by the strong right arm (which could, if necessary, be used to twist the less strong) to contribute a regular weekly sum out of its Comforts Fund collection to make that of "Lower" look more respectable. "There was no question of diverting this contribution away from the Hospital Fund, the wounded soldiers would lose nothing" —such was the argument of the leaders in "Lower" Dor. Even in that den of vice this proposal was not carried without some criticism; but it *was* carried, and a deputation was appointed to march into "Fags" and to translate it into action. It seemed to be a gratuitous addition to this evil mixture of force and fraud that the sum to be levied was only two shillings a week; so that even the stupidest little fag could see that it was to be done not so much to benefit "Lower" as to outrage "Fags."

The consternation with which the deputation was received in "Fags" cannot be described in temperate language. But from words the deputation soon proceeded to acts. Hurdwell, captain of fags, clutching the cash-box in his chubby hands, with seventeen of the Old and Young Guard round him (two were in sick-room), stood manfully at bay, and the deputation from "Lower" had to summon reinforcements before these were overpowered; blows were rained, coats were torn, and blood was shed, concerning which blood several big lies had afterwards to be told to the matron of Schoolhouse by the losers. One small boy, Harker minor, was trampled under feet, went about for several days with his head bound up, and was told by his fagmaster that he would be licked for "fighting" as soon as he was well. The cash-box was broken in the scuffle, and its contents (Hurdwell's private fortune in one compartment, and the term's accumulated funds in the other) were scattered on the floor. Williamson & Co., with a lordly assumption of integrity, contented themselves with taking their two shillings and departing. But in departing their leader stated, with great emphasis, that if any word of what had happened should reach Sixth form, even in the most indirect manner, "Lower" would seize the fags one by one and put them successively to death with unheard-of tortures.

From the demeanour of the fags during the ensuing week a more wide-awake Sixth might have guessed that something was gravely wrong in the lower strata of the Schoolhouse. One and all of the little boys were

sullen as well as frightened; they almost ceased to practise for the athletic sports, which were due in three weeks; they were infamously slack in Wednesday's grind, and three of them were beaten by their masters for this offence. They were less molested by "Lower" than usual; "Lower" was content to enjoy its triumph, of which perhaps its better elements were already half ashamed. Only one motion was proposed in "Fags" parliament that week, and it was carried unanimously—that the contribution to the Comforts Fund be at once suspended. They were going to gather no more shillings for "Lower" to plunder. They need give no reasons for this suspension to any higher authorities. "What will Miss Beatty (the matron at the hospital) think of us? Well, we can't help what she thinks."

Gloomy and silent, if undisturbed, the fags sat round the fire on the evening of 21st March, all ignorant of the fact that the fiercest of the German blows had just begun to fall on their fathers at the front. Even their interest in the war seemed almost to have ceased. Harker minor, whose bandage had recently been removed, and whose fagmaster had forgotten to lick him, was sitting in the high window embrasure reading 'Ivanhoe,' and drumming with his heels to the irritation of Hurdwell, who exclaimed, "Stow it, you ass, can't you?" For the four-and-fortieth time the assembly was considering what, if any, redress could be obtained, in what quarter vengeance could be sought for the insult of the previous week. But there was no voice, neither any that answered; it was the Dumb Diet of Grodno over again. Suddenly little Harker shut his book with a slap, jumped down and sprang into the circle, ἅλτο δ' ἐπὶ μέγαν ὀυδόν. "I have it," he cried; "we'll appeal to the judgment of God. We'll challenge 'em to fight by a champion." There was a general growl. "What the dev—what the drake's-tail do you mean, you silly ass? Who's going to fight Williamson? There's no one here knows how to fight; we should only get into a h—hurry of a row," &c., &c. Harker said very quietly, "My major is a professional bruiser."

Braningham as a school is considerably behind the times. There is neither gymnasium nor boxing-school. Games had always been enough, and had indeed been far too exclusively worshipped. The Harkers were undistinguished at these, except that the major was good at cross-country grinds. Neither were they particularly distinguished in school work. They were both Governors' nominees, sons of a "backwoods" sporting parson who hardly ever left Suffolk, and thought, when he thought at all, along early Victorian lines. In all other respects, except their lack of distinction, Harker brothers were as dissimilar as could be. The minor, who was in his first year, was a delicate, weedy

little boy, full of fun and spirits and a great devourer of novels; the major, who never opened a book if he could help it, was near the end of his second year; he was short, broad-chested, bumble-faced, with a disproportionate length of arm—the neolithic type of boy, and as habitually silent as if speech had not yet been invented. No one but his minor knew (because at school one never asks about these things) that he was an ardent naturalist, gymnast, and sportsman, with a phenomenally long "wind"; that at home he spent whole nights in the open air, and that, from his ninth year, he had studied, under his father's careful tuition, the noble art of self-defence. He was one of the two fags who had been in sick-room when the outrage of the previous week occurred, but it had only been because he had cut his thigh on some barbed wire in a recent grind, and the wound was now healed. The minor skipped up to the major and shook him. "You'll fight, major, won't you?" And the boy growled out, "Don't know," and after a pause, "Yes, if you fellows want me to."

Then in the rapid ungrammatical speech of romance the fiery minor poured forth his ideas of how it could be done, but it was long before he could communicate his own enthusiasm to his audience. It was all, you see, quite contrary to Schoolhouse tradition. Tyranny they knew, bullying to a certain extent they were accustomed to, fair play they didn't expect. There had been no set fights within the memory of man or boy; there was a vague idea that it was "a thing for which you might get the sack." A more weighty objection was raised by Hurdwell himself. "'Lower' wouldn't agree—it would only carry out its threats of isolated lickings of all fags in turn; and then we should be worse off than ever. Besides, the Sixth would get to hear of it, and then perhaps the whole story would come out"—a result which, with true faggish perversity, "Fags" was resolved to avoid at all costs. But Harker minor was equal to the occasion, and developed his arguments with some skill. Briefly they were these: there must be a set field with a ring and ropes (the ropes were at once voted down as "ridiculous fuss"); above all, there must be some one to preside at the combat—his head was full of the Disinherited Knight and the lists at Templestowe,—"I'll go to Jenky" (Jenkinson his fag-master, second captain of the house), "and I'll tell him as much as he need know."

"What'll you tell him, then?"

"I'll tell him we have had a row with 'Lower' and want to settle it fairly—I can make him think it was quite a friendly row—and ask him to preside at the fight."

It was not a bad idea on little Harker's part, for Jenkinson, a great lazy, kindly, clever boy, who was notorious for spoiling his fags and laughing at them, was himself a bit of a romantic and a crank to boot;

he thought far too contemptuously of School traditions, and the whole thing would appeal to his sense of humour. Also he had acquired by odd reading a smattering of the lore of prize-fighting. He was just going into the Guards' Cadet-School at Bushey, and didn't care much whether in this, his last term, he got into a row at school or not.

Before the bell rang for prayers, Harker minor had wrung a more or less formal permission from "Fags" parliament "to do his dashedest," the person who was to be the protagonist in the hoped-for battle sitting all the time dumb with a face like a plum-pudding. When the Schoolhouse matron went her rounds that night and looked at the boys in their beds, Hurdwell was lying awake with a smile on his face.

"You look more cheerful to-night, Hurdwell," she said; "you've all looked so glum lately, I couldn't make you out. Has there been anything wrong?"

"All right now, thank you, ma'am, good-night," said the boy.

Harker minor duly called Jenkinson for early school next morning, and found time to slip in a petition that he might come and do his "swynk" (lessons) in his study after second school. Jenky readily gave him leave to do so, and when the little boy appeared with a Cæsar and a Latin dictionary at 12 o'clock, the great man curled himself up in his arm-chair and prepared for a luxurious midday sleep over the second Æneid, which he was supposed to be getting up for Repetition prize. The little boy sat biting his pencil for a while, and then said, "Please, Jenkinson, I want to consult you—that is, we want you to help us."

Jenky looked up. "What's up, young 'un? Something about that broken head of yours last week, I suppose? Any one been bullying you?"

"No, no, nothing like that," said Harker; "but it's like this, we've had a row with 'Lower' and we want to fight them."

"Don't be an utterly ridiculous little fool."

"Well, Hurdwell said I was to consult you for our whole dor."

"Oh, you're all in it, are you?"

"Yes, we're all in it; quite a friendly row, you know, but it's an insult to 'Fags,' and can only be wiped—wiped out in blood, you know."

"Well, of all the silly things I ever heard. . . . You can't fight, you mustn't fight, and you shan't fight. Besides, I must know more about this; some of these fellows in 'Lower' are rather beasts, I think, and you must tell me what's up. . . . But why don't you go to Clowes if you've got a complaint to make?"

"Well, you see, Jenkinson, we thought you'd understand better than Clowes" (the captain of Schoolhouse).

"All right, out with it—only mind I don't approve of sneakin' any more than Clowes would."

"No, I can't tell you any more, except that 'Fags' has been insulted and wants to challenge 'Lower' to fight—fight by a champion, you know, like people did in Richard the First's time." Jenkinson roared aloud with laughter, and the poor excitable little fag turned very red and began to whimper.

"Don't laugh at me, please, Jenkinson; all we want is somebody like you to preside at the fight and see fair play," he blubbed out.

"My good fag," said Jenky, "don't you see that if I was to be such an ass as to do what you wish I should be the first person to be dropped on by the Head; I should probably be sacked at once."

"But somehow we thought you were the sort of fellow that wouldn't mind a mild sort of row. . . ."

"Mild, you call it, eh? And I'm not to know the cause—the *causa teterrima*—of this row?"

"No, you can't be told anything about that. Hurdwell would murder me if I told you; besides, I took my dick I wouldn't."

"Well, but what's the fun for me, or for you—or for any fag, for the matter of that,—to see some little kid getting knocked down by some great lout like Williamson, or Dallaway, or Messel?"

"I don't think you quite understand, Jenkinson. There's my major, he's a professional. He's boxed almost every day of his life with my pater at home for the last five years, . . . and he's very strong. . . ."

"Yes, it's one thing to box with one's own pater for fun . . ."

"Yes, I know it is; but he's fought all the village boys on our Saturday evening sports in the summer, and hardly ever been beaten, . . . many of them much bigger than himself."

"He can take punishment, as they say?"

"He doesn't care how hard you hit him, if that's what you mean. Of course, there may be some fellow in 'Lower' who's been trained too, and then he's bound to be licked; but he'll make a good fight of it, I'll bet."

"But I don't suppose there's a pair of gloves in the school."

"Oh, but we didn't mean to fight in gloves."

"My crimes and Jimmy! I can't let you fight without."

"But the old school-fights—like what you were telling me your grandpater remembered—they weren't with gloves?"

"No, they weren't, of course not; but now . . . Now, look here, there's another thing: next winter more than half you fags 'll be in 'Lower' yourselves, and what sort of a time will you bloodthirsty little beggars have then?"

"Well, Williamson and Messel will have left then, and Dallaway will be up in 'Middle'; and . . . well, if you *knew*, I think *you'd* say that it would be a jolly good thing for Schoolhouse if we did this now."

"Clear the air, you mean? And I mustn't know any more?"

Thus step by step the big boy was borne down by the ardour of the little one, and before dinner-bell rang, though not a scrap of Jenky's or Harker's swynk had been done ("Nice row I shall get into at afternoon school," said the fag to his master with great glee), Jenky had solemnly summed up the case somewhat thus:

"Now, look here; I'm on in this scene, but I can't see to it all on my own. I'll get hold of Higgins and Merivale (his own especial cronies in the Sixth). Clowes goes away to-morrow, *thank goodness!* for this Trinity Scholarship-thing. We'll do it in style. You know the old place in Woods?—there's a natural ring there, and the two dors can make a human ring by standing fairly wide round it. I'll leave you and Hurdwell to manage 'Fags,' and I'll speak to 'Lower' myself as soon as Clowes has gone to-morrow. . . ."

"But, I say, Jenkinsen, suppose 'Lower' refuse to find a man to fight?" interrupted Harker.

"I'd like to see 'em refuse, my boy; don't let that worry you; they *shall* find a man. Get 'Fags,' quietly and one by one, to stroll out to Woods after second school on Tuesday as if they were going to Sports-practice. Get two of your sharpest brats to be ready to stand where I shall put 'em to keep *cave*, for I tell you honestly, if any of the Staves (Masters) come along, I shall leg it; I don't want to lose my *Valeas*. And — another thing, if your champion or t'other feller is caught, he'll be swished, sure as eggs, but I suppose your major won't mind that?"

"Not a tuppenny dit."

"Well, tell him to put on a pair of light shoes with rubber soles."

"Oh, Jenkinson, thank you so much; you are awfully good. Then Higgins and Merivale will be like the Marshals of the Lists, I suppose?"

"Eh, what?" (Jenkinson had never read his Scott, and the little boy didn't like to confess the source of his inspiration.) "No, they aren't going to give a knee; you must find a second for your man, and so must they for theirs, . . . oh yes, and a sponge and a basin of water."

"All right, and you'll be the Warder, and drop your baton as a signal?"

"My dear fag, you must have been reading some wild gosh; your head is evidently full of Richard the First, . . . don't *you* be your major's second or we shall have you squealing out some Anglo-Saxon rot or other. Leave all that to me, and keep as quiet as you can till Tuesday; and now run away."

On the evening of the ensuing day Jenkinson, Higgins, and Merivale, in Schoolhouse blazers and slippers, strolled arm and arm into "Fags"; they evicted thence, with many sharp words, two big boys from "Lower" who were singing "Who's your Lady Friend" to a hymn-tune in front of "Fags" fire and compelling a small fag to dance to their music

by the threat of dropping the heavy poker on his toes if he stepped; they then passed on into "Lower" and were seen no more for a quarter of an hour. As they returned through "Fags" they called Hurdwell to come after them; and when Hurdwell returned just before the prayer-bell rang he was grinning from ear to ear.

What arguments Jenky had used, or what orders he had issued in "Lower," will perhaps never be known, nor did the existing members of "Fags" ever learn, in their corporate capacity, what was the course of the subsequent deliberations in the rival chamber. But during the next term or two, while the story of the fight was rapidly becoming legendary, it leaked out that Williamson, who had kept very quiet in the presence of the three Sixth-form boys, had, on their departure, proposed an instant raid on "Fags" by the whole of "Lower" with fire and sword—and "blank the consequences." This being rejected, he had said he would have nothing to do with such blanky blank rot as a fight. But the soberer instincts of the room had decided that the orders of the Sixth must be obeyed, the challenge of "Fags" be accepted, and a champion appointed. Several of the boys had thereupon said that they had boxed at their private schools and would easily be able to knock out any little beggar whom "Fags" could put in the field, that they "would take care not to hurt him too much," &c.—for of course no one knew that "Fags" had a professional champion. In short, the feeling of "Lower" had been for assuming the responsibility—readily but sadly; it had seemed to some extent as if it put the outrage which they had recently committed in a less unfavourable light to themselves. Finally Dallaway, who had taken up his parable as second captain of the dor (Williamson being deposed *pro hac vice* as in the sulks), had said he was ready to risk his body; he had modestly disclaimed any scientific knowledge, but thought he could make it hot for any small boy who came within his reach.

So noon on Tuesday was an hour big with fate—and Byng and Horne were by now known to be holding their own outside Arras and Amiens, which put every one into better spirits. The "Woods" above referred to is a thick hazel plantation, with a few timber oaks in it, about two hundred yards beyond Cloister Garth. A path runs through it leading to the cricket fields, and is crossed at right angles by a narrow track running northwards; just off this track is the small round clearing which was the traditional scene of fights in the old brutal days of our grandfathers. By 12.15 "Lower" and "Fags" were there to a boy, and little Harker whispered to himself, as he wriggled about watching Merivale and Higgins measuring the space with strides—

"Within the lists in knightly pride,
High Home and haughty Dacre ride."

But dead silence during and after the fight had been Jenky's strictest order—for the scene was so near the frequented path that the danger of discovery rendered this absolutely necessary. It is not my intention to regale my readers with a long description of a schoolboy fight. This has been described once for all by the hand of a great master. Dallaway had about three inches in height and two stone in weight the advantage of Harker major, who walked into the ring with his neolithic arms hanging down till his fists seemed to be almost level with his knees, and with such a hang-dog look that the tender-hearted Jenky whispered to him: "Don't be afraid, kid; I won't let him quite kill you." But, once they were off, the sluggish little boy was suddenly transformed into a sprite almost as alert as his minor. He danced, feinting just out of reach, two or three times round the whole ring, and then, suddenly springing from the ground, got in two fierce blows on the nose and left eye of his opponent; and the rest of the first round was on his part merely a series of dances and feints, in which he occupied himself with guarding his head, quite indifferent to the few very heavy blows that Dallaway managed to get home on his chest and guard-arm (Dallaway afterwards said that he might as well have been hitting a stuffed sack). Dallaway, in spite of copious sponging, was bleeding like a pig when he stood up for the second round, and was half-sick with the pain in his eye. He rushed fiercely at Harker, who just dived under his arm, and reappeared behind in time to see him lunging at some friend or foe in the ring of boys by mistake. From that moment Dallaway never had a dog's chance. In the third round Harker landed two more blows exactly in the same places as in the first, and the bigger boy simply reeled, stupid with the pain. But he kept his feet, for he was a brave fellow—took his punishment stoutly, and stood up round after round, occasionally getting in a heavy blow on Harker's body. He seemed, however, quite incapable of learning to guard his head, and when, in the seventh round, Harker transferred his attention to his enemy's right eye, with a force behind his blow that seemed quite wonderful, Dallaway tumbled forward on his knees and collapsed in a dead faint. That was the end, and the fags, who had stood round the ring sweating with inward triumph, but not daring to utter a single yell, rushed to their champion and hit him, in their enthusiasm, more blows in affection than Dallaway had been able to deal him in wrath.

Jenky raised his hand, and the fags fell back into the ring as Dallaway slowly sat up, rolled over on his other side, and was violently sick. Then Jenky, who had spent some time on Monday in getting up the subject of "fights by champions," spoke in a low

voice: "The fight has been fairly fought, and the best man has won; but I think that the champion of 'Lower' deserves the thanks of all his dormitory for the great courage with which he has sustained their cause, which I suspect of having been a bad one. I repeat, then, that this has been an ordeal by battle; that which we had every reason to suppose would be the weaker side has appealed to the judgment of God. That judgment has been as decisively given as it used to be in the times of—of King Richard the First. In the old ordeal by battle the arms and horses of the vanquished were forfeited to the victor, who usually allowed them to be redeemed at a moderate ransom. The vanquished on this occasion doesn't seem to have any armour nor horses, and will probably not for some days be in a condition to treat for the ransom of any other property he may possess. But my order is that Lower Dormitory do make instant amends, collectively and individually, to Fags' Dormitory for the insults or outrages, or whatever they may have been, which provoked this challenge. I shall examine the captains of each of these dormitories privately before prayers this evening, and I shall expect to hear from both of them that ample satisfaction has been made to the challengers, although I shall not inquire the cause of the challenge. And if I catch any of you young skunks from 'Lower' *in* 'Fags,' or bullying a fag, or in any way interfering with a fag, I'll flay his skin off his bones. I shall tell all I know about this fight in Sixth Common-room as soon as Clowes comes back, and if I am not perfectly satisfied that ample reparation has been made to 'Fags,' I shall also tell Snow before I leave. Williamson and Hurdwell, you will come to my study at 8.30 this evening."

"Fags" were vindictive, there's no denying that; Harker major alone kept a "calm sough"; though his right arm was much swollen and his chest black and blue, he ate his dinner none the worse, and enjoyed his sleep in afternoon school all the better for his fight. Dallaway had to retire to sick-room, and there he spent the next three days, at the end of which he emerged, and was severely swished by the Headmaster for "fighting with some person or persons unknown." He did not attempt to deny that he had been fighting, but refused to say more. Williamson still chose to remain in the sulks, and so it was Messel who, with three other boys from "Lower," appeared in "Fags" after tea on the evening of the fight, and tendered the sum of ten shillings (five times the amount of the cash looted) with a formal, if rather stiff, apology to Hurdwell. Hurdwell refused to receive either. "Fags" parliament had sat on the matter, and Hurdwell's view had been that they should demand a full

average week's contribution, which was estimated at twelve and sixpence. But Harker minor's amendment had been carried in favour of "two bob only, but *let's take it awfully.*" So now Hurdwell, endeavouring to make himself "awful," said: "We only want what you *stole*, which was two shillings. Williamson must bring it himself, not you . . . at eight o'clock sharp . . . not before; I've got swynk to do till then. And I think, . . . yes, we have decided, that your apology must be in writing, and signed by all your 'dor' except Dallaway. . . . We hope he is not badly hurt."

A very anxious hour passed, and odds were freely laid, less freely taken, that Williamson would not come. It is to be feared that few fags knew anything about their swynk when they again gathered round the fire just before eight. Hurdwell frankly said he would give little Harker tickle-toby for giving bad advice if the enemy held out. But the school clock had only just finished striking when Williamson, looking very white, stalked in and handed over a florin and the written apology. Hurdwell read it out, looked round his company and asked, "Are you fellows satisfied?" Then, as every one said "Yes," he looked Williamson hard in the face and said, "Thank you, you may go now." He was thus able to tell Jenky at 8.30 that everything was all right now, and, "Please, 'Fags' wishes to thank you most awfully." History does not record what passed at the subsequent interview between Williamson and Jenky except that a full half-hour was occupied with it.

Harker minor proposed that the florin should be framed and hung up over Hurdwell's desk; but his major, who had uttered no word the whole time, was roused and said, "If you say another word about it, minor, I'll beat you."

The Comforts Fund collection in "Fags" at once recovered its tone. In the ensuing summer term it passed all former records, and its glories were crowned when Miss Beatty invited the whole dormitory to tea in the nurses' dining-room on the last Saturday of the term. "You, of course, will sit on my right, Captain," said she to Hurdwell, "but who on my left?"

"Please, ma'am, that must be Harker major. I'm afraid you'll find him very shy, but he did more for the Fund this year than any one else. You mustn't ask how. But he'll eat his tea all right."

He did.

SWIFT, STEELE, AND ADDISON.

BY J. A. STRAHAN.

THE whole reading public accepts without question the portrait of himself which a writer draws in his books, especially when the writer is one of those who have acquired

"The deep and bitter power to give
Their images again as in a glass,
And in such colours that they seem to live,"

or, in the language of prose, is a man of genius. And this is so whether the writer, as so many writers do, makes himself the hero of his story, or whether he leaves the public themselves to piece together a portrait of him from the opinions on morals, religion, and life contained in his works.

But the portrait of himself which a man of genius draws in his books is seldom accurate: it is sometimes flattering; strange to say, it is more often the reverse. Every man, and especially every man of genius, has in a corner of his brain his private lunatic asylum wherein reside his insane fancies, impulses, and frailties. The normal man keeps every cell in that asylum locked, and denies to the world, and sometimes even to himself, that such a place exists: it is only the fool and the genius who throw open the doors and invite the world to enter. The world does not trouble itself about the follies of the fool, but it is deeply interested in the follies of the genius; and its picture of the genius depends on the extent to which that private asylum is opened for its inspection in his works. One will open every door; another will open only one or two; a third will keep every door as carefully locked as if he were a bishop. And the world will judge each according to the number of insane fancies, impulses, and frailties of his which each displays to it, forgetting that the true character of a man is shown not by what he writes but by what he does.

These reflections have been suggested by the different portraits which the world has drawn of three great writers of the same age—Swift, Steele, and Addison. Swift is painted as a politician who was false to his party, a priest who was false to his faith, and a man who was false to mankind. Steele, on the other hand, is regarded as a maudlin drunkard, an absurd politician, and a good-humoured fool whom the virtuous Addison tried vainly to make prosperous and keep sober. As for Addison, he in popular esteem is simply the just man made perfect. And as old Isaac D'Israeli has shrewdly pointed out, this estimate of their merits as men has affected the estimate of their merits as writers. Surely but for the view he held of Steele and Addison's characters,

Macaulay, bad literary critic as he admitted himself to be, would never have been so foolish as to write that Addison's worst essay in the 'Spectator' was as good as Steele's best; nor would Thackeray, but for his view of Swift's character, have committed the stupidity of taking as a heartless jest the heart-rent irony of the Modest Proposal that the landlords who had already devoured their parents should eat also the children of the starving Irish peasants.

As a very short investigation will show, these respective portraits have little or no resemblance to the real men as they displayed themselves to their contemporaries in actual life: they are simply ideal pictures of them drawn by the public from their writings. In his writings Swift opened very wide one door of his private asylum and revealed a cell in which sat his insane hatred of an abstraction which he called man; Steele in his opened every door, and pointed out to an astonished and amused world every foolish impulse or frailty which found a home in his head; and Addison in his kept every door tightly locked, and let the public see none of the frailties which possessed him, but only the wisdom and virtues which he sometimes did not possess. And the reading public, and some who should have known better, have taken in each case the picture of the writer as he appears in his writings as a true portrait of the writer as he appeared to his neighbours. Let us see then what each man was in actual life.

Swift's insane hatred to man in the abstract was due primarily no doubt to the dash of madness in his blood; but it must have been aggravated by the humiliations of his youth and the disappointments of his age. He was an orphan from his birth, and a poor dependant till he was twenty-eight. And those on whom he had to depend were not over-considerate. His uncle, Godwin, who was the first of them, did much for the orphan boy; but according to all accounts he never let him forget that he was doing it. The second of them was Sir William Temple, and in his relations with him, at least till Swift took Holy Orders, "like George Nathaniel Curzon, He was a very superior person." After taking Holy Orders Swift was for some years his own master, and for several years later he was master of the Empire. Then on Queen Anne's death came a fall almost as great as that of Napoleon or the Kaiser—a fall which doomed him to exile, and to watch from his exile men whom he hated wielding the powers he once possessed in the State, and men whom he despised promoted over his head in the Church. It is to be noted that all the works which have earned for him the character of a scoffer and misanthrope were written during the years of his early humiliations or of his late disappointments. During the

time of his triumph he was, as he more than once reminds Stella in his 'Journal' to her, a very cheerful fellow and not at all censorious of man and his ways.

Swift, like many another man of genius, was, though not selfish, absolutely self-centred, viewing the world always from his own standpoint and his own circumstances. Milton was the same, though Swift never went so far as the man who, when his wife ran away from him, immediately wrote a pamphlet advocating free divorce, and, when she came back to him, never again mentioned the subject. So when the world treated Swift well he was very content with the world. When it treated him badly, and especially when it treated him as he thought unjustly, he turned those clear azure eyes of his on it to discover its defects. In one man he found hypocrisy, in another falsehood, in another ignorance, in another conceit, in another envy, in another cruelty; in all selfishness. These qualities he bulked together and classed as the characteristics which marked an abstraction which he called man, and he hated that abstraction because of these qualities; and when the world was unkind to him, he raged against this abstraction with the fury of a madman, and said and wrote every notion, however gross and callous, that came into his inventive brain, which would shock or outrage that abstraction, and demonstrate how little he cared for it or its opinion.

The mistake his readers fall into is in taking his hatred of this abstraction and his scorn for its hypocrisies, to be hatred of the actual men about him, and scorn for their convictions. Take his attitude towards religion. He in his youth wrote 'The Tale of a Tub,' in which he jibes at the follies men have been guilty of in connection with the doctrines of Christianity; and the world in consequence was half convinced he himself, though a clergyman, was not a Christian. Even Johnson and Thackeray, consciously or unconsciously, agree on this point with the world; and the thought of it poisons the views they take of his character and conduct throughout life. Yet few clergymen were more wholly devoted to their faith, and especially to their Church, than Swift was. It was devotion to his Church which led to his breach with the Whigs. When they urged him to support with his pen their project of repealing the Test Act, which he thought would be detrimental to the Church of England, hinting that if he did so he would have his reward, he answered angrily that he was not going to make his fortune at the expense of his Church; and when they pressed him further, he replied by publishing a violent pamphlet denouncing it, which is certainly a contrast to the virtuous way of Hoadley, who bet the King's mistress £5000 he would not get a certain bishopric, and, when she got it for him, paid up like a man.

And if he performed his own devotions privately, he performed them, and led the devotions of his flock regularly at a time when neglect of duty was rampant among the clergy. Dr Sheridan also notes that he spent more in keeping his Cathedral in repair than any previous dean, and that he never held a benefice which he did not leave in a better condition than it was when he received it.

And this enemy of man was a very kind friend of men. His remembrance of his old dependency made him often too eager to show by insolence or overbearing that he was no longer dependent. But to the people he met who were loyal to him he was not only loyal but generous. He was a considerate master, and where good service was given he gave a good return: he is, so far as I know, the only dean in the United Kingdom who has erected in his cathedral a monument to a faithful valet.[1] Thackeray says that sooner or later he slunk away from all his friends. That may be so, but what is more important is that none of his friends ever slunk away from him: they remained faithful during his life to him, and after his death to his memory. Witness Dr Sheridan who, quarrelling with him when he was half mad, could not speak too lovingly of him when he was in the grave. And what friends he had—Pope, Arbuthnot, Congreve, Gay, Addison, Bolingbroke, the choicest spirits of the age. He is said, with reason I think, to have been more rude and contemptuous with women than with men, and yet no man ever received greater affection from women. I do not refer merely to the adoration of Stella and Vanessa; but, as Lord Ossory says, till he became hopelessly insane his deanery was a regular seraglio of virtuous women, all delighted to serve him; and when he became insane his niece, Mrs Whiteway, waited on him with the watchfulness and affection of a devoted daughter. Of course it is possible that he was liked by women not because of his good qualities but because of his masterful ways.

"That *man* he used unduly
To swagger and to bully,
And, Oh, and Oh,
The ladies loved him so!"

There is little doubt but that, from the time he obtained emancipation from his youthful servitude, he did, in his personal relations with men and women, bully and swagger a bit; but his essential actions were directed nevertheless by a good heart and by a high principle. During the years of his greatness he was in a position, as he says, to make

[1] In the south wall of St Patrick's Cathedral stands a tablet with this inscription:—

ALEX. M'GEE, servant of Dr Swift, Dean of St Patrick's.
His grateful master caused this Monument to be erected in memory of his discretion, fidelity, and diligence in that humble station.
Ob. Mar. 24, 172¾. Aetat. 29.

any man's fortune except his own. He made many men's fortunes, and most of those men had no claim upon him save that arising from worth. Nothing seems to have exasperated him more than appeals to help an incompetent because of his incompetency, nothing to have pleased him more than appeals to assist merit for merit's sake. And he knew merit when he met it. He worked for Pope when he was a poet in the making; for Parnell, the gentle songster, whose family was to produce the iron politician of a later time; for Berkeley, whom, while still a youthful Fellow of old Trinity College, he recognised as a philosopher destined to be immortal. And this aid to merit did not depend on political or social friendship or association: he worked as hard for Addison and Steele when they were threatened with dismissal for being Whigs as he did for any of his Tory friends, and for Berkeley, a new acquaintance, as for Congreve, an old schoolfellow. His principle he has stated in his 'Journal to Stella,' when writing of Berkeley: "I will favour him as much as I can. This, I think, I am bound to, in honour and conscience, to use all my little credit towards helping forward men of worth in the world" (12th July 1713).

Byron, when Southey, the friend of virtue, denounced him as the friend of Satan, said truthfully that he had given away more in charity in a year than Southey had given in his lifetime. Swift might have responded to his critics in the same way. He has been called not merely a misanthrope, but a miser. He was in his own expenditure most parsimonious, but his frugality was not due to meanness, but to generosity: he saved to give. From the time he freed his deanery from the debts following his installation, he divided his income into three parts. One was for his own use; one for the relief of the poor and wretched about him; the third he saved up to found a hospital for persons afflicted with the terrible malady from which he felt all his life he himself must sooner or later suffer—madness. He had obtained the land for this hospital, and he was, with the assistance of the architect, Sir W. Fownes, planning the buildings, when he became the victim of the very disease he was labouring to alleviate. When, after years of seclusion, he died, the poor, wretched, and oppressed among his neighbours had not forgotten what this savage misanthrope had done for them, and they lamented him with a passionate grief such as has seldom followed to the grave the most philanthropic of philanthropists. "Peace to his ashes! He was the *noblest enemy of man* that ever lived."

Steele, as I have said, threw open in his works and letters every cell in his private lunatic asylum; and he not merely permitted but invited the public and his friends to enter and view the inmates. His writings contain a public con-

fession of all his insane impulses and frailties, and a public repentance for the follies into which they led him, which after all were not very much worse than most men's; but the world could not understand any man making such an exhibition of himself unless he was a fool, and a fool it decided he was. Accordingly it did not take, and does not to this day take, him or his works seriously. To this day it regards him as a sort of stage Irishman, with much good humour, a certain amount of wit, and a muddled intellect; constantly in drink, constantly in debt, and constantly ridiculous. As I have said, it is only the fool and the genius who open their private asylums to the public. Sometimes the public think the fool who does so is a genius; far more often they think the genius who does so is a fool.

In real life Steele was very far from being a fool. In business affairs his imagination sometimes ran away with him. For instance, his search for the philosopher's stone, and his project of bringing over from Ireland living salmon in tank-boats, on both of which he spent much time and money, were hardly undertakings that would commend themselves to hardheaded business men. But most of the notions with which that same imagination supplied him turned out in practice astounding successes. 'The Tatler' and 'The Spectator' were not merely new ideas in journalism, but their results financially were such as amazed the world of his day. In political affairs he was a violent partisan; but sometimes he differed from his party, and when he did so differ he was always right. His fault in all the affairs of life was not want of sense, but want of self-consideration and self-restraint. "He was," as he himself says, "always of the humour of preferring the state of his mind to that of his fortune." When he was minded to do some vicious or foolish act he did it recklessly; and, being a good and wise man at bottom, he was soon afterwards minded to repent it; and nothing would then satisfy him but to declare repentance publicly—a proceeding which was as sincere as it was silly. When he was minded to do some act which was right but indiscreet, he did it recklessly; but here, whatever disasters it brought upon him, he never repented. "I am in a thousand troubles," wrote Addison in 1713, "about poor Dick, and wish that his zeal for the public may not be ruinous to himself." As we shall see, there was never any danger of Addison's zeal for the public being ruinous to him.

In other words, Steele in managing his personal affairs acted on the principle on which we were lately advised by one of our statesmen to manage our public affairs—"Damn the consequences." Judging from the results in Steele's case it is not altogether a prudent one on which to proceed. But for it he would have in his life been as successful as his friend Addi-

son was, and after his death have enjoyed as a writer as high a reputation, and as a man a higher character.

Born in the same year as Addison (1672), the son of a Dublin solicitor, one of his earliest recollections was the death of his father, a recollection which he afterwards relates with a pathos and tenderness of which Addison was absolutely incapable. On the death of his father he became like Swift the charge of his uncle, his mother's brother, Henry Gascoigne. Gascoigne was private secretary to the Duke of Ormonde, who was a governor of the Charterhouse; and through the Duke he obtained a nomination to the school for his youthful charge. Here Steele met Addison, and a friendship began which continued not till death, but till politics, parted them. From the Charterhouse Steele went to Oxford, where he became post-master to Merton College. Here the first damage to his fortune, due to his principle of conduct, overtook him.

He had apparently grown tired of academic life, and was minded to become a soldier. Now he had a relative who owned "a very good estate in the County of Wexford." Apparently this relative was a Quaker: at any rate, he had a strong objection to the army. He had intended to make Steele his heir, and he wished him to remain a civilian. But Steele, "preferring the state of his mind to that of his fortune," followed his fancy. He left Oxford without a degree, "to the regret of the whole Society," became a gentleman volunteer in the Life Guards, and lost the "very good estate in the County of Wexford."

His brother Guardsmen, like the world later, made some mistakes about him. Because he was good-humoured they thought he was a coward, and tried "their valour upon him." Soon they found out their blunder: he challenged one, Captain Kelly, fought him in Hyde Park, and nearly killed him. That brought a flood of repentance to Steele's kindly heart, and from that day till his death he hated duelling: in the very last play that came from his pen, "The Conscious Lover," he denounces it. And, of course, he had to publish his repentance, which he did by writing 'The Christian Hero; An Argument proving that no Principles but those of Religion are sufficient to make a great Man.' This caused his fellow-Guardsmen to make another mistake about him. Just as they had thought a soldier who was not a bully must be a coward, so they thought a man who was religious could not but be disagreeable. So, as he explains, to dissipate this delusion he wrote a comedy, 'The Funeral, or Grief—*à-la-mode*,' in which, as he says, "tho' full of incidents that move laughter, virtue and vice appear as they ought to do." In writing this comedy, perhaps, he was merely influenced by the state of his mind; but it is just possible he was also for once thinking of

the state of his fortune. At any rate, he introduced into it some flattering references to King William III., which so pleased the monarch that, as Steele tells us, his Majesty entered in his "last table-book" Steele's name as that of one "to be provided for." Unfortunately, the King died before provision had been made for Steele.

Steele wrote some more successful plays and became known as a literary man of merit. As the practice then was, the Government thought it its duty to give him a place. He was appointed a Commissioner of Stamps. Later, Harley, possibly with the hope of securing his pen for the Tories, appointed him Gazetteer, raising, as Swift tells us, "the salary from sixty to three hundred pounds." If Harley thought he could so secure Steele's pen he knew little of his man. When the popular tide turned, and the Tory section of the Coalition began to oust the Whigs, Steele, who was ardently attached to Whig principles and the Whig party, acted once more on his principle, and in the 'Tatler,' which he was then conducting, made a fierce attack on Harley himself, which, as Swift says, "was devilish ungrateful." It was also very disastrous to the state of his fortune, for it resulted in Harley's dismissing him from the office of Gazetteer. It would also have resulted in his being dismissed from the Commissionership of Stamps; but Swift, who at that time respected him as a writer and liked him as a man, came to his rescue. On his intervention it was agreed to continue Steele in the Commissionership on the implied understanding that he should write no more against the Tories. Accordingly the 'Tatler' was ended and the 'Spectator' was begun, founded on the principle of "an exact neutrality between Whigs and Tories."

Macaulay's account of this business in his essay on 'The Life and Writings of Addison' shows how party and personal predilections can lead an honest man to misstate grossly plain facts. He says that Steele was appointed Gazetteer by Sunderland on the recommendation of Addison, and that he was maintained in the Commissionership by the influence of Addison, who was personally very popular with the Tories. Now Swift, who should know the truth and who had no motive to misrepresent it, says expressly in the 'Journal to Stella' that Harley appointed Steele to the Gazette, and that he himself maintained him in his Commissionership: the latter statement he repeats in the letter to Addison which led to the breach between him and Steele. Furthermore, most of his references to Addison in connection with the business are far from flattering. In the entry dated 22nd October 1710, after telling how he had spent two hours with Mr Lewis, the under-secretary of Lord Dartmouth, pleading for Steele, he continues: "I had a hint given me that I might

save him in the other employment" (that is, the Commissionership), "and leave was given me to clear matters with Steele. . . . In the evening I went to sit with Mr Addison and offer the matter at a distance to him as the discreeter person; but found party had so possessed him, that he talked as if he suspected me and would not fall in with anything I said. So I stopped short in my overture and we parted very dryly. I will say nothing to Steele and let them do as they will: but if things stand as they are, he will certainly lose it, unless I save him: and therefore I will not speak to him, that I may not report to his disadvantage." Swift was not without hopes, indeed, of restoring Steele to Harley's favour, and with this view he arranged an interview between him and Harley which Steele failed to keep. What caused that failure in Swift's opinion appears from the entry, dated 15th December 1710: "I believe Addison hindered him out of mere spite, being grated to the soul to think he should ever want any help to save his friend." As for Addison's popularity with the Tories, the only evidence Macaulay cites is Swift's comment on Addison's unopposed return in the election of 1710: "I believe if he had a mind to be king he would hardly be refused." But that was when Swift had had little intercourse with the Tories. In the entry of 4th February 1711 he tells a different tale: "I have represented Mr Addison himself so to the ministry, that they think and talk in his favour, though they hated him before. Well, he is now in my debt and there is an end; and I never had the least obligation to him, and there is another end."

As has been stated, there was an implied understanding when the Tories continued Steele in the Commissionership that he would not attack them. But nothing could restrain him from following his principle of preferring the state of his mind to that of his fortune. So he ceased publishing the neutral 'Spectator' and began publishing the partisan 'Guardian' and then the still more partisan 'Englishman' and innumerable pamphlets. One of the Tories he attacked was his old friend Swift. He imputed to him the authorship of a libellous article that had appeared in the 'Examiner,' which Swift had at one time edited. Swift wrote an angry letter of complaint to Addison. Following his strange practice of never acknowledging or denying in so many words the authorship of anything, he merely pointed out that he had long ceased to write for the 'Examiner.' No doubt he addressed the letter to Addison as "the discreeter person," in the hope that he would induce Steele to make some amends and so prevent a rupture. But Addison was *too* discreet: that prudent and cold-blooded gentleman did not see how it would benefit

him to mix himself up in his friends' quarrels, and all he did was to pass on the letter to Steele. Steele was the reverse of discreet: he noted in his answer that Swift had not definitely denied that he wrote the article, and he practically reasserted that he did. Swift was furious, and from that moment entertained a hatred of Steele which continued even after Steele was in the grave. After this Steele made himself impossible as a place-holder under a Tory Government, so he resigned the Commissionership, and became such a reckless assailant of the Tories that when he was elected M.P. for Stockport they expelled him from the House. Meanwhile the state of his fortune naturally was not improving.

The state of the fortune of his political opponents was not either: it depended on the life of Queen Anne, and as Wharton gracefully observed, "if their hopes depend on this life they are of all men the most miserable." In 1714 Queen Anne died and the Whigs came back to office and to offices. Steele got one or two of the latter; but he soon got rid of them by acting on his principle of preferring the state of his mind to that of his estate. The Whig Government introduced the bill for limiting the royal prerogative of creating peers. Steele, rightly, as everybody now agrees, objected strongly to the principle of the measure; and, as was his wont, expressed his objection in several violent pamphlets, to which the Government replied by ejecting him from his offices. So any improvement in his fortune derived from his offices came to a sudden end.

One pitiful result followed Steele's attacks on the Whig Government and its bill. Addison, like the steady party man and party pensioner he was, supported the Government, and was put up by it to support the bill and answer Steele. He did so with an acrimony which showed how little he valued the many past services and the long devotion of Steele. Steele replied acrimoniously: a breach ensued between the two old friends, and shortly afterwards Addison died without seeing any need of a reconciliation.

The bill was defeated, and some of its opponents were taken into the Government. Then the Government made a worse blunder: it supported the South Sea Bubble, which again Steele denounced. When the Bubble burst so did the Government. Walpole, who, like Steele, had opposed both projects, came into power, and he restored Steele to his offices. But the state of Steele's fortune was now too desperate to be thus repaired, and shortly afterwards he had to come to an arrangement with his creditors, retire from public life, and retreat to a little property he still possessed in Carmarthenshire, where he died. Swift's hatred of him, I have said, continued after he was in the grave. In a couplet he records with much satisfaction his

enemy's sad end. Steele, it runs—

> "From perils of a hundred jails
> Withdrew to starve and die in Wales."

The statement is as incorrect as it is unkindly. Steele's creditors were more generous than his alienated friend: they left him enough to live on in comfort for the remainder of his days.

This, then, is the tale of Steele's public life, and there is nothing in it discreditable to his heart or head. His conduct was always honest, and his views, especially when he differed from his party, were always right. All that can be charged against him is want of prudence, which in public life is scarcely a virtue, since it means merely self-consideration. But in private life it is a great virtue, since there it means self-restraint; and in private life Steele was as devoid of prudence as in public life. He was a kindly acquaintance, a generous friend, and an ever-affectionate husband and father, and a less cold-blooded rake and not a more heavy drinker than most of the public men of his day; but in his expenditure he unfortunately "preferred the state of his mind to that of his fortune." When he wanted a fine house for his beloved Prue, or when he wanted to entertain some of his fine friends, he did not hesitate to incur expenses which he could not pay; and when he was pressed to pay these expenses he did not hesitate to borrow money from his fine friends which he could not repay. Byron did much the same in his youth, but once he reached the insolvent state he felt so bitterly the humiliations of his position that he became something of a miser to prevent its recurrence. Insolvency brought no humiliations to Steele, and he went on spending and borrowing until he came to utter bankruptcy, which is regarded in a commercial country like England as the last stage in moral and social degradation. And in truth there was little excuse for Steele. Most of his life he had a considerable income from his places and his works, and he had married two heiresses; and if he could only have in his private life preferred the state of his fortune to that of his mind, he might have lived in comfort, and even luxury, and without any acquaintance with debts, or duns, or sheriff's officers, or sponging-houses.

It is worth noting that his bankruptcy did not affect the fortunes of his children. Only two of these survived him—an illegitimate and a legitimate daughter. The illegitimate daughter married into comfortable circumstances, the legitimate into the aristocracy; the latter's husband, a Welsh judge, succeeded to a peerage as fourth Lord Trevor. It is interesting to compare this posthumous success with that of another Irishman of greater genius and greater improvidence—Richard Brinsley Sheridan—whose descendants are now by dint of marriage among

the wealthiest and noblest of the land. It is also interesting to compare it with the posthumous failure of the ever-prudent and prosperous Addison. He left one daughter, who was weak-minded from her birth, never married, and died an imbecile.

So much for the real character of the writer who, because he revealed all his frailties in his writings, is generally regarded as a drunken fool. Now let us consider the real character of the writer who, because he revealed none of his, is generally regarded as the just man made perfect.

"Addison," said Mandeville, after spending an evening with that admirable man, "Addison is a parson in a tye-wig." Twice it would seem he was very nearly being a parson in a full-bottomed one. He certainly intended to become a priest at the beginning of his career, and it is said he intended to become a bishop towards the end of it. He was diverted from his purpose in the first case by getting a pension which he had done nothing to deserve, and in the second by getting delirium tremens which he had done everything to deserve. Horace Walpole tells us that in the end he died of brandy, and it is certain that he lived most of his life chiefly on wine. Although, however, he began as a poor man he ended as a rich one; for in his course he had held many fat offices for which he was unfitted, and sinecures which fitted him, as people say, down to the ground. In that he was very unlike Steele, who preferred the state of his mind to that of his estate: whatever happened to Addison's mind, he always saw that his estate did not suffer. When he lost a mistress whom he kept he at once sought out a wife who kept him; and when his impecunious friend Steele, who had opened the gate to fame for him, failed to pay him a debt, he sold up his home. "If the world owes anything to Addison," said the same old friend, "the world owes Addison to me." If the world owed anything to Addison, we may be sure he had it back again with compound interest and costs. This, then, is a brief but accurate outline of the life of a writer whom the world has learned from his writings, and been taught by the writings of others, to regard as the just man made perfect.

As we have seen, Steele met Addison at the Charterhouse, and like Steele, Addison went from the Charterhouse to Oxford, where he became deeply learned as learning was then understood at that University. He was well read, that is, in Latin verse, and he could write verse in Latin as well as he could in English, which perhaps is not saying as much as it seems. He obtained a Fellowship at Magdalen, and was preparing to enter the Church when he thought of something better: he wrote some Latin verses on the Peace of Ryswick and sent them to the learned Montague. The

learned Montague was delighted with them, and munificently rewarded the learned poet—at the expense of other people. In other words, he obtained for him a State pension. Addison was then twenty-five or -six. When, after their quarrel, Pope told him to his face that he had been a pensioner all his life, he was not far wrong.

The pension was ostensibly given so that he might travel abroad, and learn foreign languages so as to fit him for the public service. He went abroad, and, while there, did more than learn foreign languages. He wrote a poor account of his travels, a poor treatise on medals, and the first four acts of a poor play. He also wrote when in Italy a poetical letter to his patron Montague, which is probably the best of his poor poems. And he enjoyed himself immensely, giving apparently full play to his amiable weakness for wine. After his return home we find him, in acknowledging a gift of wine from Hamburg, announcing that his journey through Westphalia was the pleasantest part of his travels owing to the abundant supply of "hoc." In the same letter he apologises for delay in returning thanks for the new supply on the ground that, after sampling it, he had to wait some time till he had recovered sufficient steadiness of hand to write.

When he returned home his political friends were out of office; his father was dead; and, so far as is known, he had for a year or two no income save that coming from his Magdalen fellowship; but just as a poem on the old peace had obtained him his first pension, another poem on the new war brought him his first office. He, at Lord Godolphin's request, wrote a poetical celebration of Marlborough's victory at Blenheim, and was rewarded for it by promotion at once to a Commissionership of Appeals, and subsequently to an Under-Secretaryship of State. Surely never before or since has so mean a performance received so munificent a recompense—at other people's expense. Nobody now ever reads 'The Campaign' except out of curiosity, and not a line of it is remembered by the average educated man save one—"Rides on the whirlwind and directs the storm."

But these promotions proved only the beginning of his reward. Among the Whig leaders was the famous and infamous Earl of Wharton before mentioned, and he for some reason—no doubt it was "Addison's popularity, his stainless probity, and his literary fame," which Macaulay asserts were the causes of his elevation—developed a friendship for the new placeman and became his political patron. All the same, it is well to remember Wharton's character. Swift has described it succinctly. Wharton, he says, was so occupied by "vice and politics that bawdy, prophaness, and business fill

up his whole conversation—the most universal villain I ever knew." Thackeray shudders at the wild talk that Swift must have heard over Bolingbroke's burgundy and Pope's port. I wonder what sort of conversation Addison listened to over Wharton's wine, of which, true no doubt to his tastes, he must have partaken freely and frequently.

Wharton nominated his protégé for a rotten borough, but Addison's timidity and shyness made him unfitted for the House of Commons. Then Wharton was appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and he found a new and better post for him—that of his Chief Secretary. The salary attached to this office was £2000 a year with perquisites, which, as money was then worth three or four times its present value, was no mean remuneration for a gentleman whose sole qualification for the office was having written a prize poem. But it did not satisfy Addison. Macaulay notes with admirable vagueness that he also "obtained a patent appointing him Keeper of the Irish Records for life, with a salary of three or four hundred a year." Swift is more explicit. In the fourth of his 'Drapier Letters' he tells how Addison bought the Keepership of Records in Bermingham's Tower of £10 a year, and got a salary of £400 annexed to it, "though all the records there are not worth half-a-crown for curiosity or use." Some time ago Addison's official letters, written while in Dublin, were published for the first time by Mr Erlington Ball. They might have come from the horse-leech's daughter, for their constant cry is "Give, give!" Addison's appetite for cash seems to have been insatiable. He told Swift—very truly, no doubt—that when in office he never remitted his regular fees in civility to friends: no one who has studied his career would ever imagine he did.

Macaulay, in discussing Addison's connection with Wharton's rule in Ireland, says that Addison afterwards "asserted, what all the evidence we have ever seen tends to prove, that his diligence and integrity gained the friendship of all the most considerable persons in Ireland." That, although he does not see it, is what people call a left-handed compliment. All the most considerable persons in Ireland connected with the Government of that unhappy island were then bent on two objects, and two objects only. The first was the further degradation of the already degraded Catholic Irish; the other the pillaging of the whole people, Irish or English. In the pursuit of the first, they contrived during Wharton's administration to pass one of the most infamous Acts which have ever appeared on a statute-book—an Act which enabled a Catholic child by abandoning his own faith to rob his own father. I wonder was it his diligence in promoting this which gained for Addi-

son the friendship of all the most considerable people? In pursuit of the second, most of the public revenue was being diverted from the service of the country for the purpose of providing pensions and sinecures for the most considerable persons in Ireland and hungry adventurers and place-hunters from England. Was his integrity in promoting this object the second ground on which he gained their friendship? I can only suppose it was, since he himself eagerly shared in the plunder.

In this particular it is interesting to compare the conduct of Swift, that hater of men, with that of this lover of them. Ireland was, when Addison came to it, as badly governed a country as well could be: its rulers were mere jobbers, robbers, and debauchees, and its people in the bulk were in absolute wretchedness. Addison dwelt on the happiest terms with the rulers, and never bothered his virtuous head about the people. A few years later Swift took up his permanent residence in Dublin. There was no change in the character of the rulers or in the condition of the people. So soon as he fully realised the true state of things he began a crusade for the reform of the Government which imperilled his position, liberty, and even life, and stinted himself in his living that he might have means to alleviate the miseries of the people.

The general election of 1710 resulted in a rout of the Whigs, and both Wharton and his protégé had to return to England. Addison was greatly depressed. Writing to Wortley Montague on 21st July 1711, he says that within the last twelve months he had lost a place of £2000 a year, an estate in the Indies of £14,000, and his mistress. The place was of course the Chief Secretaryship, and the estate in the Indies was that left to him by his brother (who had some time before died in India), of which he had failed to obtain possession; but who his mistress was nobody knows, and, but for this letter, nobody would ever have known that he had a mistress. However, he was not so badly off after all. He had contrived to save so much during his residence in Ireland that he was able to invest £10,000 in the purchase of an estate in England; and, with his usual resource, he no sooner lost a mistress, who presumably cost him some money, than he set about securing a wife who would bring him much more. He had been, it seems, called in by the Countess of Warwick and Holland to advise as to the education of her son, then a lad of thirteen; and at once he resolved to be not merely the son's tutor, but also his stepfather—a position which he did not attain till five or six years later. Meanwhile, however—owing probably to Swift's good offices—he continued at £400 a year, guarding in London the records which were not worth half-

a-crown for curiosity or use in Dublin.[1]

When on Anne's death the Whigs returned to power, Sunderland, under whom Addison had served as Under-Secretary of State, became Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and with him Addison returned to his old office and the £2000 a year, with perquisites. He did not remain in Dublin long this time, but came back to occupy a seat at the Board of Trade. In 1716 he married the Countess of Warwick; and in 1717 Sunderland, who was now head of the Whig Government, appointed him Secretary of State. His acceptance of the office was, said Pope, "the worst step he ever took. He did it to oblige the Countess of Warwick and to qualify himself to be owned for her husband." The Countess felt she had married beneath her and was dissatisfied. There were, however, other reasons than that for her dissatisfaction. Only two traditions have, so far as I know, come down to us as to Addison's way of life at Holland House. One is that, when he was writing, his custom was to place his desk in the middle of the long narrow library and a bottle of wine at each end of it; then he composed his sentences while walking up and down the long room, and wrote them down each time he passed the desk, and took a bumper of wine each time he came to a bottle. The other is that, on nights when her ladyship was not watching him, he used to steal out of the house, cross to the tavern in Kensington Square, which Thackeray has immortalised in 'Esmond,' and remain there toping until her ladyship discovered his absence and sent her chairmen to carry him home.

Addison's unfitness for the office and the failure of his health soon compelled him to resign the Secretaryship. However, his short tenure of it was not without its compensations: he was, on his retirement, granted a pension of £1500 a year for life. He did not enjoy it long. Though only in his forty-seventh year, his constitution was undermined, pro-

[1] Macaulay has treated of these matters in a very remarkable way. He says that we do not know what the property in India was which is referred to in the letter to Wortley Montague, and later he notes that he had inherited a fortune from a brother in India, who died a year or so before this Indian property was lost. Then he suggests that the mistress referred to in the same letter was the Countess of Warwick. That the property in India was the brother's estate seems certain; that the mistress was not the Countess of Warwick seems also certain. His acquaintance with the Countess began, according to all accounts, with his being consulted as to the young Earl's education. In 1710 the Earl was thirteen years of age. Before that Addison had been two years and more in Ireland, and three more years an Under-Secretary of State in England. He could not when in Ireland, and it is very likely indeed he would not when Under-Secretary, act as tutor to even a young Earl. If, then, he acted as tutor to the Earl before that, it must have been when the lad was under eight years of age. It thus seems certain that his acquaintance with the Countess began only after he came back from Ireland, and probably it was the straitness of his means then that induced him to become the boy Earl's tutor.

bably by his habits, which, as he grew older, seem to have grown worse. At any rate in 1719 he died, and Horace Walpole tells us it was of brandy.

A deathbed scene is always dreadful, but it may be dreadfully affecting or it may be dreadfully revolting. If in fact Addison died of brandy, then when he sent for his young stepson, and asked him to witness how a Christian can die, his deathbed scene became dreadfully revolting. Personally it would be to me less revolting to see poor tipsy Steele hiccupping out piety than to contemplate the smug self-righteousness of Addison dying of drink.

Even if he died like a decent man, such self-righteousness would be disgusting. All his biographical admirers have an uneasy feeling this way; and, to calm it, represent his conduct as intended to bring back to the paths of virtue a very ill-living young man. For this purpose they do not hesitate to blacken the Earl of Warwick's character; and each does it after his own fashion. Johnson contents himself with saying he was "a young man of very irregular life, and perhaps of loose opinions." Macaulay, just as he makes a statement of purely imaginary facts to justify Addison's act in selling up his old friend Steele's home in order to recover a debt, gives a purely imaginary account of young Warwick's way of life in order to prepare the reader for this deathbed speech. He represents the youth as addicted to "beating watchmen, breaking windows, and rolling women in hogsheads down Holborn Hill," and "growing up a rake," notwithstanding Addison's efforts "to teach him to study letters and the practice of virtue." Now this dreadful character was at Addison's death just twenty years of age, and he died when he was twenty-four. His statue in Kensington Church represents him as a delicate, rather effeminate person; and the epitaph, which of course we cannot take as absolutely true, is in such terms as would make it ridiculous if he was such a youth as Macaulay paints him. Moreover Malone, who looked into the matter with his usual scrupulous care, declared that there was not an atom of evidence of his having led a vicious life. All that Pope says about him is that he was "but a weak man," which is exactly what his statue in Kensington Church would suggest he was.

There was another scene at that strange deathbed which should be remembered. When Addison knew he was dying he sent the same Earl of Warwick to Gay, who pressed Gay "in a very particular manner" to go and see him. When Gay saw him Addison confessed that unknown to Gay "he had injured him greatly." Macaulay, just as he thinks Addison's words to Lord Warwick evidence of his humble piety, regards this confession as proof of his delicacy of conscience. Well, everybody is entitled to his

own opinion. The important point is, what was Addison's motive for thus stabbing in the back a "distressed man of letters," as Macaulay describes Gay, "who was as harmless and as helpless as a child," and who moreover was a personal friend? Macaulay suggests it was party passion. But then Gay had no party, and Addison had no passion: all that Gay ever did in the Tory way was to dedicate a poem to Bolingbroke, while he was very much liked by the Hanover family. I think it is necessary to look for another motive.

Strange as it may appear to us now, the one thing above all others which Addison prided himself upon, and was jealous of, was his reputation as a poet. He actually thought himself the first poet of his time, and he was envious of any one who threatened to contest his supremacy. He had been a friend of Dryden's, and yet Tonson tells us he was constantly "running down Dryden's character as far as he could." Phillips was his friend, and yet we know through Dr Leigh that, when Phillips' poem in blank verse called 'Blenheim' was read in his company, "he made it his whole business to run down blank verse." Now, Gay was a poet too, and in fact a much better one than Addison. Is it possible that it was jealousy which induced Addison to do him an injury behind his back? If it was, we can have little doubt that the wicked Earl of Warwick was speaking the truth when he told Pope that Addison was secretly bribing Gildon to publish scandals about him in the gutter press, and that Dr Lockier was also speaking the truth when he declared that "Pope's character of Addison is one of the truest as well as one of the best things he ever wrote." But it was not the whole truth.

This, then, is the real character of the man whose virtuous pen has convinced the world that he was the just man made perfect.

VIGNETTES.

BY ELLA MACMAHON.

X ELLEN.

ELLEN was a travelled person. In her youth she went to America, but, unlike the general run of emigrants, she did not make her home there permanently, but came and went—"back and forth"—to use her own expression, several times between Ireland and the United States. She went out in the first instance to a married sister, and I fancy that, as is so often the case, the trip was more or less a matrimonial speculation. Marriage, however, never materialised for her; and by the time I came to know her she had long parted with any illusions on that score. Most of her years in America were spent in domestic service, and, according to her, the States, notably Massachusetts, including the town of Boston, formed a perfect Elysium for household workers of every kind. She herself was a cook, and, by her own account, earned fabulous wages. She always babbled in dollars, regarding them as a much superior currency to ours, and one, two, and three hundred dollars a week seemed to be the remuneration she was accustomed to receive. I can only say that the upper circles of Boston (Ellen never lived with lesser people, for whom she had the feudal disdain of her class and country) must have been less exacting in their standard of culinary art than might be supposed from the magnificence in which she declared that they lived.

Her love and admiration for America and the American people was countered by her hatred and suspicion of England and the English.

Nevertheless, I am bound to say that she disliked and distrusted the Germans even more. Her feelings about them arose from the time (long before the war) when in the service of a United States family she lived in the house with a German lady's-maid, who was "a glutton and denied God." As cook in this establishment Ellen had to cook for the servants as well as for her employers, and I imagine that the trencher capacities of the Teuton were strongly antagonistic to one of a race which seldom or never overeats itself, and who personally ate scarcely more than a bird. Moreover, if she was to be believed, the Germans were serious competitors to the Irish in all branches of employment, although, as she was always careful to add, "'twas the Irish every one wanted, for all the world knew that the Irish are better workers than Germans or any one else."

I asked her once if there

were many English servants to be found in the States. She replied loftily—

"Oh, nobody'd have *them* in America. They're only trash out there, and if there's ere a one to be found 'twouldn't be in grand houses where first-rate 'help' are kept, but only in inferior down-East places."

"Down-East," I fear, conveyed little to my ignorant understanding, but it seemed to be a term of contempt.

The genesis of Ellen's opinion of England lay, by her own declaration, in the study of history.

"An' let me tell ye," she would say, peering at me through round gold-rimmed spectacles, which greatly magnified the coal-black eyes behind them, "that 'twas not in Irish history nor in English history that I learned all I know, but in good American books, and *they're* never afraid nor ashamed to tell the truth."

These historical authorities, however, seemed to have left her — chronologically — much confused. Indeed, at the risk of sounding profane, it might be said with little exaggeration that to Ellen a thousand years were as one day and one day as a thousand years. Henry VIII., Queen Elizabeth, Oliver Cromwell, and Queen Victoria seemed inextricably mixed up in her mind, and it was evident that she conceived them to have all flourished contemporaneously and connived together against the liberties of Ireland. To her the Massacre of Drogheda and the potato famine of 1847 were not separated by nearly two centuries. The latter, indeed, formed the basis of an indictment against Queen Victoria, which Ellen as usual claimed to have discovered in American history-books.

"For God Almighty and the world knows that *she* was the murderer of the poor Irish people. Doesn't every one with a heart in their breast compassionate them that she sent to their cruel death! An' my dear, let me tell ye, they rose up in Heaven to meet her!"

I was tempted to point out that murderers do not enter Heaven, but this new and staggering view of a monarch hitherto, so far as I knew, held universally in high esteem, kept me silent in order to hear more.

"An' why did she do it?—because th' Irish people had all the money she wanted to grab, an' when they wouldn't give it to her she did her best to starve them, the unfortunate craturs——"

"But," I interposed involuntarily, "the Queen didn't cause the famine!"

"Oh, an' didn't she! May the Lord love yer innocence! and doesn't every one know 'twas the English in secret put the blight on the pitaties and destroyed the poor people's only food. An' them that was left an' that she couldn't slay that way, didn't she hire ships for to take them away and maybe drown them in the depths of the wide ocean; but the Lord Almighty was too much for her, and *He* brought

them safe to America, and the good charitable people there took care of them, and they're grander there now and more thought of than ever she was in her life, if she was fifty queens."

On the other hand, Ellen greatly respected President Wilson. She had been in the States during his first Presidential election and was a keen partisan of his.

"The poor man's friend," she called him. "President Wilson is slow but sure," was her invariable remark when, during the first years of the war, conjecture was rife as to the action of the United States. "President Wilson is a righteous man, ay sure."

Ellen's vocabulary was a delicious blend of English as spoken in Ireland and as spoken in America.

The result was interesting, but a little difficult till you understood it. The "deepo" and "your grips" mystified me till I discovered that the first was the railway station and the second your hand-luggage. "Real cute," "dry-goods," "soft-goods," "stores," and "candy-stores" were frequent phrases, and she was fond of prefixing her remarks with "I guess," and ending instead of beginning her sentences with "sure." Withal, in moments of excitement she returned instinctively to the idiom of her native land, while her accent and intonation remained wholly that of the Southern Irish peasant.

England and history apart, Ellen was kindly natured and peaceable. She deplored and deprecated violence or ill-will. I once ventured to point out that violence and ill-will had been too often sadly identified with our country.

"Why, certainly," was the composed rejoinder; "why, certainly, an' that's because th' Irish, God help them, have no *policy* in them. I have no policy meself. If I was one o' them that had policy I'd be very different to-day, rich and grand maybe. But Irish people have no policy; they're poor simple folk, an' that's why God loves them, and it's what leaves them where they are."

Ellen's employment of the word "policy" meant, as far as I could gather, the possession of a quality or qualities combining tact and self-interest, with a touch of dissimulation, and an even and not easily-provoked temper. Her temper was not very good. It was quickly roused and extremely passionate. I know it was a source of grief to her, and that it had stood in her light more than once. And all the more because her standard of conduct and feeling was high. I never knew Ellen to tell a lie, and she was the soul of honesty and sobriety. Moreover, she never forgot a kindness, and her affection for those she served burned brightly after many years of separation and was often touching. Tears would spring to her eyes in speaking of one especially beloved mistress in whose household she had lived in her youth in Ireland, and she was never weary of extolling her.

"I see her before me this day as plain as I see you, an' she in the garden mindin' the flowers. My dear, 'twas herself loved the flowers, an' she'd be that sad if they'd fade or die on her. Well, the flowers of heaven are round her feet now, and *they'll* never fade nor die on her!"

The women and girls who throng the public-houses in London shocked Ellen very much, though there was a touch of malice as well as irony in her comments.

"Ay, there's th' English for ye now! I thought 'twas only the poor ignorant Irish ever got drunk. Well, I'll tell ye this now. I never seen the sights in Ireland, no nor in America, I've seen here. Young girls and women in and out of the public-house all day long. An' they dressed up be the way they were real ladies. Feathers in their hats and pneumonia blouses, and shoes with heels that'd twist yer ankle to look at them, an' they standin' out in the public road with pints o' porter in their hands. Why, in Ireland 'tis only the tinkers' women that'd go for to do the like o' that."

The great sights of London left Ellen cold. Evidently the American history-books did not, as I gathered from her, include any mention of the historical treasures of England's metropolis. After she had seen the regalia at the Tower she gave me a homily on the vanity of earthly pomp.

"An' the like o' them," she concluded, meaning the kings and queens, "will all die just like me and you, and they won't wear *them* in heaven, but maybe you and me'll wear better."

As I have never felt the most rudimentary desire to wear a crown in this world, I fear the prospect of doing so in the next left me quite unelated, but it seemed to afford Ellen peculiar gratification to reflect upon such a reversal of our respective *rôles* in the future. She was, indeed, an odd mixture of purely feudal predilections and the modern democratic opinions of the new world. But I think the democracy was only a veneer, and not a very thick one, upon the fundamental feudalism; also the fact of the regalia being that of the English sovereigns did not tend to lessen the lofty moral superiority of the attitude towards it. Yet, on the other hand, in spite of her cherished enmity against England, she was proud to relate how a constant visitor at a house where she lived was one of our Ambassadors to Washington; a "lovely" man, she pronounced him, lovely in her vocabulary signifying ethical rather than physical beauty.

"An' I guess I could hear, my dear, that he said I was the best cook he ever knew. An' I'll tell ye why—ye see he was struck on fish diet, and it's meself can cook fish with any one."

This was not more than the truth. Fish was Ellen's culinary *pièce-de-résistance.*

Like most of her class, Ellen was profoundly suspicious of

the Law, and though she possessed the highly litigious disposition of her race, she had a complete disbelief in the existence of Equity either in Judicature or Legislature. The occurrence of the census threw her into a frenzy of suspicion.

"An' may God forgive them for their iniquity; an' why do they want to know *my* name and age and religion for, if it isn't for some wicked purpose. I'm only a poor humble Irish working-girl [Ellen was over sixty], and mark my words, there's murder in their hearts agin me this day."

I ventured to point out that the Government wanted to know every one's name and age and religion, my own included. This slightly mollified her, but she instantly became suspicious on my account, and adjured me to be careful and cautious in my dealings with a conspiracy so nefarious as that which called itself the British Government. I inquired if the census was ever taken in the United States.

"Certainly not. That's the home of liberty and the protector of the poor, an' there's no one *there* that's offeecious and wantin' to pry into yer affairs agin yer will. No, sure."

Nevertheless, for all its shining virtues, civic and individual, Ellen would not remain there permanently. When she painted the glories and beneficence of the great families with which she had lived while in the States, I endeavoured to extract from her her reasons for leaving them, but I was not at all successful. But I suspect that that unfortunate temper of hers, and her equally unfortunate racial proneness to take offence at nothing, joined to a certain smug pharisaism in her dealings with others, had something to do with it. She would say mysteriously—

"There's things I seen, and things was done which if I chose to tell I could; but *my* way is silent contempt, my dear, 'silent contempt.'"

I cannot say that Ellen's contempt was invariably silent, but no doubt she believed it was.

I have never met any one with less physical fear than Ellen. She happened to be living in London during the greater part of the German air-raids, and her indifference to them was as astonishing as it was genuine. I feel sure she would have walked out composedly into the midst of them had she been called upon to do so. She would stand at the window gazing out with unaffected interest when most persons were miserable and even terrified. She invariably made tea during their progress for any one who might be with her, although never for herself alone. She was not, as she expressed it, "struck on tea-drinking."

During one of the heaviest and most alarming of Zeppelin raids she sat stitching, and the only remark she made was to observe mildly that—

"Indeed, if it would please the Lord to put an end to this awful war 'twould be a mercy for the poor eratures that was

bein' sent to their end without warning."

In like manner she appeared to be quite indifferent, so far as she personally was concerned, to the submarine danger, and paid more than one visit to Ireland while it was at its height. I confess I regarded these expeditions (which she regarded as a pious duty) to see her sister as foolhardy, not to say foolish, but she either could not or would not see them in that light. One day in an outburst of that rare confidence which occasionally overtakes the Irish peasant—otherwise the most inscrutably reserved of Western peoples—she said to me—

"I'll tell ye this now, an' it's a sure word,"—the heavy black eyes behind the big gold-rimmed spectacles shone larger and more mystical than ever,—"'tis no matter *what* was to come upon this world, 'twill never touch me, nor har-rm me so long as I am now. I'll never be drowned, nor shot, nor burnt, nor kilt at all at all." She paused dramatically. There was something gnome-like about Ellen always; she was very little and almost misshapen from rheumatism, but she looked more gnome-like than ever as she stood peering up at me and uttering this truly remarkable pronouncement with emphatic solemnity.

I was careful not to smile, but involuntarily I exclaimed—

"It's well to be you, Ellen!"

She made me a sort of little bow, and the smugness which was characteristic of her in certain moods slid, so to speak, over the solemnity of her mien, and she said with no little complacency—

"Faith ye're right there, I guess. But 'tis not every wan that has what *I* have—no, sure. Ye see the way it was, when I was a poor young girl a holy priest gave me a blessed token, and there's few in the whole wide world has that medal, only meself; but as long as that holy blessed token hangs round my neck I'll never come to an on-nartural end, but I'll just have a nice, long, slow death in me bed."

XI. JOBBER BRANNIGAN.

We call him Jobber Brannigan because there is scarcely any odd job to which he cannot turn his hand. A bit of carpentering, glazing, slating, bricklaying, resetting broken tiles, repairing fencing, papering and painting, and even simple plumbing, are not beyond his compass, while, unlike many others of his mixed craft in Ireland, he can do them passably well—although, like most amateurs, he is more enthusiastic over his work than the professional craftsman. He is now a very old man, being "turned eighty," as he says, but he is extraordinarily hale. This is partly due to an active life joined to a naturally temperate disposition, and partly, no doubt, to his having been endowed

with an immensely robust frame and constitution. Of late he has dwindled somewhat in body, but otherwise Time has left little mark upon him.

I do not know his origin; it is indeed "wropt in mystery," though possibly the Poor Law records might be able to throw some light on it. But whatever it may be, I fancy that it was a particularly humble one, for I have gathered from himself that his early life did not include education other than the most elementary instruction, and hardly even that. This he has never ceased to deplore, but he has been assiduous, so far as opportunity served, in trying to repair the omission. He is very poor—for jobbing at best is not a lucrative career—but he carries his poverty gallantly. There are times, however, when, in spite of the vast endowment of the old age pension, he finds it absolutely necessary to have recourse to the ordered beneficence of the large and imposing mansion which, once the "seat" of an ancient and important family, now serves the county as a workhouse, or as they call it in Ireland with less false shame and more precision, the poorhouse.

Brannigan has no aversion to that establishment as such, and accepts its hospitality with *débonnaire* resignation. Further, he frankly confesses that "in th' bleak o' the winter" it is warm and comfortable, while possessing obvious advantages at or about the Christmas season. At the same time he is by no means blind to its defects.

"'Tis not the place itself I'd fault in a hundred years," he has remarked more than once, "but the *society* in it isn't up to the mark at all at all. Too much of it would contaminate ye if ye let it. I could never be in*tim*mate with e'er a wan in it. Ye couldn't now. Why, them paupers have no breedin' in them, and that's the fact. Ye'll hardly believe me when I tell ye, but I give ye me word, they'll stare over the wall and pass remarks on the pedes*teer*ians goin' along outside. Very voolgur! Very voolgur!"

During the war Brannigan was heart and soul with what he calls th' Alleys. He fervently invoked his particular saint, and spent pennies, hard to come by, on candles in the Allied cause. He discussed the progress of the war with great fervour.

"An' I'll tell ye what *I'd* like to see — an' with the help o' Gad I'll live to see it — an' that is the British flag flying from end to end of Galley-po-li."

His sporting instincts are keen, as might be expected; but age precludes an active part in many forms of sport. He is still, however, able to enjoy that species of angling which consists in sea-fishing with a rod from the end of the pier. Here he will sit for hours patiently awaiting results, which are seldom rich and always tardy. One bitterly cold day, with an icy north-easter blowing which

was at once boisterous and cutting, I met him bound for his favourite pastime. I observed that he would find it freezingly cold. He reared himself up and slapped his chest magnificently—

"Is it cold, ye mane? Ah, then, look at me!"

Thus adjured, I could see that he seemed to be wrapped in a multiplicity of coats which, if not warm, were certainly weighty.

He caught my eye, laughed, and slapped his chest again.

"Cold, how are ye? Sure I'm *jacketed* to the heart like an onion!"

Although an industrious worker, Brannigan is not altogether free from the defect of dilatory methods, nor is he guiltless of making promises and not fulfilling them, or of not finishing a job to the scheduled time—transgressions which, however irritating to his employers, are hardly peculiar to Irish workmen alone. But he will frequently begin a piece of work, and either work very slowly or suddenly disappear, leaving it half done, perhaps for several days. As he is impeccably sober—to all intents and purposes a teetotaller — drink cannot be held to account for these disappearances. My private opinion is that, whenever he has a rush of work, he tries to satisfy several clients at the same time, and ends, naturally, by incurring the wrath of all. Once when a pressing job of painting and papering had to be finished hurriedly, his disappearance just on the verge of its completion was highly exasperating. After two days had passed he turned up again, apparently quite unconscious of any culpability. Accosted wrathfully, and asked curtly what he meant by his desertion at such a moment, his explanation was forthcoming without a shade of hesitation, and with engaging candour—

"Sure I couldn't come at all, and that's the truth; wasn't I walkin' out with th' Unemployed, God help them!"

To still further reproach and remonstrance hurled at him with all the force of irritation and hope delayed, he seemed to be wholly indifferent, at least so far as expressing any sense of shame; but he listened docilely, and when the onslaught abated he struck an attitude in the middle of his paint pots and brushes.

"Look a here!" His right hand (with a lump of putty in it) lifted itself as if in invocation to the ceiling, which was still awaiting its second coat of whitening—"I give ye me solemn worrd of honour this day, that I'll not forsake this room now if I was to be here for a thousand years till," his hand dropped with a sounding smack, thereby releasing the lump of putty, which fell plump on his boot and stuck there—"till I put the *qui-aytus* on it."

FROM THE OUTPOSTS.

THE LAST PLACE IN INDIA.

I.

WHEN my orders came to stop a temporary gap at Victoria Point, I had only been in Rangoon for a month, and was just beginning to grow familiar with its novelties. I had admired the exquisite daintiness of the Burmese women, contrasting with the solid simplicity of the men, and was growing more able to distinguish and to generalise roughly upon the other main ingredients which filled its cosmopolitan streets and bazaars; the swarming Chinese, a lack of pigtails in the younger men compensated for by the merciful rarity of foot-binding in the younger women; the crowds of Coringhi coolies, like bronze statues, who provide the manual labour, just as China provides the business ability, which the undisciplined, happy-go-lucky Burman cannot be relied upon to supply himself; the coolie women, walking like goddesses, in the reds and oranges of India; the sprinkling of outlandish Shans and Chins and Kachins; and the usual assortment of other races from the Indian Empire. Lastly, the babies: totally naked, fat, yellow Chinese babies; nearly black Coringhi babies, simply dressed in a piece of string and a rupee, or a heart-shaped silver charm, worn round the waist; and, best of all, adorable Burmese babies, exact miniatures of their elders in their little white shirts and bright-coloured silk lungyis, with their heads completely bisected by the horizontal parting which separates the straight perpendicular fringe below from the tight little top-knot finished off with a flower above. A perfect menagerie of races, in fact, awaited further exploration, a cheerful teeming mass, shepherded by the big policemen from the Punjab. Then I had watched the carved, intricately rigged paddy-boats and the eye-painted sampans on the rushing river, and elephants juggling with teak logs in the Bombay-Burmah Corporation's yards at Dalla; I had penetrated the rustic lanes of Kemmendine, where scores of brightly-painted varnished parasols lie drying in the sun like immense flower-beds. I had lost balls and found snakes and red ants in the Sensitive Plant on the golf course at Mingaladōn, and I had lain in a punt under Scandal Point on the Royal Lakes, thinking of Magdalen Tower beneath the shadow of the most dominating object in Rangoon, the vast golden spike of the Shwe Dagōn.

A few hours later I was steaming down the river in the *Sir Harvey Adamson*. Behind us the Shwe Dagōn glowed through the dust and haze; on our right stretched the dismal alluvial plains of Lower Burma, intersected by a network of creeks, through which the Irrawaddy Flotilla steamer makes its way from Rangoon to Henzadá and Bassein; on our left, the old pagoda of Syriam, which had seen the Portuguese, the Dutch, and the French come and go, and the British come and remain, looked down on the enormous tanks and refineries of the Burma Oil Company, whose pipe-line ends here. Later on I was to see from the Irrawaddy steamer, on my way up to Sagaing and Mandalay, the close-packed forest of derricks on the oil-field of Yenangyaung, suggesting a new philosophy of life to the desolate remains of all that time and Kubla Khan have left standing of the thirteen thousand pagodas of Pagān, a few miles away up the river.

Once past Elephant Point and the lightship, we headed due south, pursued for hours by the silt of lower Asia brought down by the Irrawaddy, the Sittang, and the Salween: Lower Burma, too, is the gift of a river. Faint on the east ran the long ridges of Tenasserim, that thin coastal strip of Burma which finally ends at my destination, Victoria Point.

Next morning found us discharging into lighters in the sweltering estuary where the river runs down from the wolfram mines of Tavoy. Rocky wooded islands shimmered behind us, jungle-clad hills lay in a semicircle in front, and the shore was fringed with mud-flats and dense mangrove swamps. When the unwieldy lighters hoisted sail and lumbered away up the tide, and we turned to depart, a dense hot silence fell over the steamy landscape. I knew now what the anchorage of Treasure Island looked like, and waited half-expectant for the appalling cry of "Darby M'Graw" to come quavering down over the green tops of the trees.

The day after we crept up the tortuous channel to Mergui, aided by the white sailing-mark on the roof of the Deputy Commissioner's bungalow, and landed in bobbing sampans. The town is hot and shut-in: its most notable products are rubber, pearls, pearl-blisters, and edible birds'-nests. These last are produced, one is told, from the salivary gland of a sea-swallow: one robbery in a season is made good; but if a third nest is extorted, it is said to be tragically tinged with blood. The nests, which look like opaque white gelatine, are used to make a Chinese soup: a single nest weighs, and is worth, a rupee.

It was happily arranged that I need not wait three weeks for the next Chinese steamer, but might proceed by the D.C.'s launch *Mercury*, in company with a wireless expert, bent on mysterious

affairs of his own. While his stores were being shipped, I had time to explore Mergui pretty thoroughly. I climbed the hill above the pier, and sacrificed the whiteness of my cotton clothes in ascending the tall and tarry tower, which carries a fixed vane and a wind-gauge for the Telegraph Department. I was rewarded by a wide view, and by the discovery that the Government contractor had fixed his north to point south, and his east to point west. Doubtless when, fifty years hence, the next tourist-minded traveller has the energy to climb the tower, he will, if he is observant, make the same discovery.

At the Club I fell in with a fellow-Oxonian, wounded and discharged from the Army, and was invited to come out and see the rubber plantation, in whose rural shades he was seeking a cure for shell-shock. A smiling Burmese clerk rushed me a dozen miles in a side-car to the "road-head": and my friend transported me over the three extra miles of "kacha" road in a light buggy. After tiffin he showed me the simple process of clearing, tapping, and latex-collecting: later in the day I saw at the head factory the final production of the crêpe rubber of commerce. When work was over, a dozen or so of the Madras coolies, with yellow and scarlet flowers in their long black hair and bells round their ankles, came and danced before the bungalow, very much in the Morris manner: "Morris On" and "Beansetting" were the two closest parallels that I recognised: I had seen very similar dances performed by criminal tribes at Sholapur, near Poona. Finally, a hideous boy, with a slow bashful smile, did imitations of a cock, a cat-fight, a coolie being beaten, and a donkey—the last, both for tone and volume, a perfect masterpiece. At the close of the performance a few rupees sent the troupe happily off to get drunk on toddy.

When I got back to Mergui I wandered about the little lanes, and watched some infantile Burmese cricket, and a party of youths, thickly tattooed, in the old-fashioned way, from waist to knee, playing chinlōn, the Burmese football, a skilful but purely static form of amusement. Finally, I went and sat on the *Mercury* and looked through glasses at the amphibious life of the sea front, a shore of mud fringed with rickety huts on piles. The evening was cool and clear, and the phosphorus magnificent: the breaking ripples edged the shore with a brilliant border of smoky green light. At nightfall arrived some more passengers—Maung Saw Sho Shi, B.A., his wife, and her ayah. The anchorage was perfectly calm, but within ten minutes one of the ladies had proved the superiority of mind over matter by being violently and loudly sea-sick. However, I forgave her next day when we marooned the disconsolate

little party at the minute and inaccessible village of Bōkpyin, to which the Burman had been "relegated" as Township Officer. Behind it rise high ridges of pathless and impenetrable jungle, which send down a small river through dense green walls of forest to the muddy sea. Unless the *Mercury* happens to put in, there is no communication with the outside world.

I was roused at 4.30 by the anchor chain being wound round the drum of my ear, and at five we started in a marvellous dawn. The *Mercury* is a glorified steam-launch of 80 feet or so, with a 6-foot draught. She is a good seaboat, despite the seventeen patches alleged to adorn her boiler; her new one was diverted to Basra for the Inland Water Transport. Our way lay at first through an unending lake, bordered with yellow-green mangrove swamps seamed with noisome little channels wriggling away into the solid forest wall behind. Above them rose considerable red-soiled hills, covered with jungle. We passed a few tiny hamlets, each with its long fish-stockade in the water off shore, consisting of two converging lines of vertical bamboos, whose oscillations suffice to frighten the fish from escaping between the poles, and pass them gently on from one to another till they are imprisoned at the apex in a funnel-shaped net, surmounted by a tiny hut perched precariously above.

By nine we had emerged from the narrows into the heart of the Mergui Archipelago, a vast collection of abrupt, inscrutable islands, of every shape and size—from mere rocks to peaks of 2000 feet. They stretched away all round us under the blinding sun into the blue distance, stifled with jungle, distorted by mirage, and with an overpowering effect, not so much of Sleeping Beauty as of Death. For this was primeval Nature: they had never been alive, never been called into full being by human association and human history. Save for the scores of jelly-fish, looking like parachutes attached to cauliflowers, for a few diving sea-birds, and for the incessant little boilings of the water that ejected a flying-fish and told of the relentless and unceasing struggle below the surface, we detected no trace of life all day. As I saw the Archipelago two years ago, so it was a thousand years before, and is to-day,—a scene of ethereal beauty, but, to the civilised eye, inhuman.

One human association, however, I did discover, when I had made friends with the big competent Chittagonian "serang," and joined him on his little bridge. He knew every channel in his head, so I was free to pore over his entrancing old chart, and to find that all these islands have most Stevensonian names: the Sugarloaf, the Canister, the Five Sisters. Better still were the notes: "Foul ground," "Black Rock visible 8 miles," "Several rocks

here uncovered at low water," "Good anchorage reported on this coast"—delightfully vague those last; while, for irony, I found at one spot in this wilderness the legend "Thinly populated"; and for sheer romance, just behind it, "High Land on the Main."

Towards evening we passed Boat Island, steered on the White Rock, bumped on the bar, and anchored in the creek of Bōkpyin. I took a sticky walk of half a mile to the end of all things, where the jungle stands ready to be "let in," watched a tree-trunk being chipped and prized open to form a dug-out, bought some cocoanuts, and enjoyed one of the sunsets for which the Archipelago is famous. At Bōkpyin there was nothing more to see.

Next day we had another long steam of ten hours. The scenery in this southern section of the Archipelago is more open, and the oppression was relieved by a few deep-red sails. At four we anchored off the jetty at Victoria Point. The officer in whose relief I had come did the honours of the dak-bungalow, and when the *Mercury* took him away next day I was left, except for an officer of police and his wife, as the sole European resident of the station.

II.

Victoria Point lies on the last southerly tip of Burma, a high narrow promontory pointing due south. West and south are islands and tide-races; north, a road leads up towards Māliwūn, 25 miles away, but after the tenth mile is derelict; east is the estuary of the Pākohān river, and beyond it, four or five miles off, is Siam. Immediately opposite Victoria Point is the mouth of the Renong river, on which lies Renong, a small ramshackle town composed of Siamese officials and soldiers under a half-Chinese governor, an English tin-dredging company, and an ambiguous conglomerate of Burmese and Malays and non-descripts who carry on all the business there is. There are no Siamese shops: the chief store is kept by Boon Teck, a delightful Chinaman, once a journalist in the Federated Malay States, and for seven years co-lodger in London with a small girl now world-famous through her connection with British tooth-powder and its artistic ally, the Musical Comedy Stage: to Boon Teck her career is a source of intense gratification. North of Renong is the Isthmus of Kra, destined some day to be world-famous too, through a ship canal; south, the high bare coast runs down past other gravel-tin dredgers at Ngow and Ratrūt, to Pukét, Penang, Singapore, and the Equator.

Life at Victoria Point was simple. My abode was a three-roomed dak-bungalow, raised a dozen feet off the ground on wooden legs. My staff con-

sisted of four persons: my priceless bearer, Mohamed Said, from Sialkot; Joséf, a black youth from near the Jaganath temple at Puri, who hewed wood and drew water; Sadhu, a melancholy pallid sweeper boy from the Punjab, who "swept" the whole station, including the little hospital; and Sāmmi, the Madrasi "cook." But Sāmmi "could only bake bride-cake," boil eggs, that is, and stew things into a slush: the first fish he tried to cook was, as was truly said by my bearer, who instantly took over his duties, "unripe." However, Sāmmi was revenged later when a recalcitrant cock, during his execution, dug his spur into Mohamed's wrist; the bird, he told me with ill-concealed glee, "hit him." Supplies were mainly non-existent, but what there were never cost me a rupee a day; and with fish and eggs and bread and an occasional hen and an insufficiently occasional goat (miscalled "muting"), and plantains at the war rate of twelve a penny, I did well enough. A more serious problem was that of occupation; after a spell of service on two fronts, and a year of duty in India, I was very happy to sit down for a change, but my month passed none too quickly.

Twice a day I had to go to my duties at the Wireless Station half a mile off; but one soon tires of the rending crack of its discharge, and the high thin note in the receiver, like a telephone trying to talk to itself without words. The rest of the day was my own, to read or sleep or explore. Bathing, of course, was impossible, as I was soon informed by a young shark who came nosing along the rock on which I was sitting. A mile away was the jungle, wherein was an extensive assortment of both small and great beasts: crocodiles and black panthers by the coast; and in the high ridges north of the station, bear, elephant, and tiger, besides snakes and monkeys innumerable. An elephant had recently eaten a native's banana-trees; and just before I arrived, a tiger, driven down by the drought, had killed a cow on the road half a mile away, and snuffed (so the Eurasian operator asserted) round the door of the Wireless Station. But shooting meant a longer expedition than I had time for, and killing things has never amused me. At first I tried to walk in the jungle; but a jungle looks best from the outside. Once you are in, you can see nothing whatever; and the noise you make on the parched leaves frightens every bird for a mile. The uncanny silence produces a sinister feeling of being watched by unseen eyes: you find that, complementary to your dislike of killing animals, is an even stronger dislike of animals killing you; and after I had been warned that my perambulations were rather foolishly risky, and unlikely to show me any of the wild things I had come out for to see, I desisted.

So my walks were limited to a square mile or so; but in that space were inexhaustible

delights. The scenery, of course, was superb; the combinations of sea and hills rivalled, for sheer beauty, the Western Highlands or the Saronic Gulf. The distant peaks of St Matthew's and Loughborough Islands recalled Mull and Aegina; and the greater richness of vegetation made up, in part, for the lack of "humanity." The hills behind the station were thickly wooded, and echoed with the distant wailings of gibbons; there were many flowering shrubs; and some of the forest trees were enormous. In the competition of the jungle, it is neck or nothing, and the winners run prodigiously to neck.

During the week after I arrived I was continually mystified by loud noises, as of an invisible motor-boat, or of a steamer creakily blowing off regular jets of steam where no steamer was. At last I discovered the sound's source, unexpectedly and in the third dimension. Just opposite the jetty was a small precipitous island, where I used to watch, through my glasses, troops of small monkeys burst out on to the shore, plunge into most entertaining free fights, tumble into the sea with piercing screams, and then amicably betake themselves to hunting for shell-fish on the mud-banks just awash. The island was colonised by hornbills; and it was their wings, as they passed home overhead in the evening, that made these surprisingly loud and mechanical noises. Later on I saw one sitting on a dead bough—a big dull-coloured bird with a complicated face; it bent backwards and forwards on its branch, like a gigantic and rhetorical cockatoo, uttering loud vulgar yells at my intrusion. Burma, like India, is rich in birds with maddening voices. One used to utter two even notes all day, unendingly, like an inverted cuckoo. Another would first imitate the whirr of a high-speed wheel; then came eight or ten high, hinge-like creaks, slower and slower; then off again with the whirr. And it was not only the birds that troubled. As I read in the bungalow at night, I would be startled by a loud noise at my very ear, like an old grouse practising ascending scales for the first time, followed by half a dozen clear, two-note calls, with a little descending grumble dying away into silence at the end. This was the contribution of the Tuktoo (named from its call), the big lizard that haunts Burmese houses,—an unwholesome, decayed-looking brute of a dirty yellow-green with dirtier purplish spots and a staring yellow eye. Later still at night, when the moon had nearly cleared the sky of stars, would come droves of pi-dogs sweeping in rather eerie play through the compound, perfectly silent. Three of them, with some communal puppies who yapped valiantly at my heels, but fled my face, attached themselves to my staff. Twice I was woken by the shrieks of the lady dog seeking to repel from the refuge of my bedroom a too attentive swain from elsewhere. The second time I was

forearmed. By a divine chance my first stone from the window hit the swain as from heaven. He "went at once," totally bewildered: and I then had to stone the rescued lady into silence, and a more befitting distance from my person. Victoria Point, in short, was a silent place; but its silence was "dotted" (in the Irish R.M.'s expressive phrase) with a whole series of arresting and unfamiliar sounds.

One of my chief haunts was, of course, the shore. Unhappily, the coral strand was invisible under alluvial mud; but I never visited it without discovering some new thing. There was a small spring where I could sit (till the mosquitoes became intolerable), and surprise kingfishers and a peculiar pigeon with dark-green wings. The sea contained odd little fish: one was semi-transparent, with a projection on its nose as long as itself, like a five-inch narwhal. On the mud were myriads of little creatures with blunt froggy faces and goggling eyes; they skipped about on fins and tail, and liked to embrace a mangrove shoot, wriggle up, and cling to it, looking for all the world like Bill the Lizard emerging from the chimney. One day, too, I met several columns of little crabs, the biggest a hundred strong, and marching in curiously regular pairs. As I approached over the mud, they vanished in a breath, dug in: they appeared to have a single enormous claw, as big as themselves, which they brandished in front as they walked; when they were in a hurry, the claw was folded up with the precise effect of a collapsible fire-escape.

Finally, there was always something to look at in the tiny hamlet: chinlōn, or a man with a casting-net, or the Gurkha guard of the Treasury, opium-store, and wireless, playing barefooted football on a hill, or small urchins engaged in an elaborate game like miniature skittles, which they played with the skill and enthusiasm of demons. And by the jetty was a little colony of Salones, living like lake-dwellers on tumble-down platforms over the mud. They are sea-gipsies, primitive and nearly naked, who live an amphibious life of their own, and search the sea-caves of the outer islands for edible nests.

Once or twice existence was more exciting. There were little trips up the Māliwūn road to a rubber estate, or across the channel to the hospitality of Bilborough Island, where, on the seaward face, was a shore free of mud, with coral and wonderful sand, but disappointingly few shells. Once, too, I crossed over to Renong to see the tin-dredgers and buy excellent whisky at pre-war prices. Nobody worried about passports, though I believe that, officially, my excursion was equivalent to desertion from the British Empire and His Majesty's Forces. But Simla was far away, and the whisky a great acquisition. My conveyance was to have been a substantial boat with a rush awning amid-

ships, but it was said to be too heavy for the wind, so we transferred to a tiny native craft, first cousin to a dug-out, and with only a few inches of freeboard. A boy in the bows and a man in the stern each worked an oar tied with a straw loop to an upright. They rowed standing, like gondoliers; but once past the hornbills' island, we caught a stiff westerly breeze. In two minutes the boy had stepped a bamboo mast, with a transverse spar and a boom, of which he held one end, and away we went. The flimsy boat was beautifully light, and we shipped very little water, which was lucky, as there was nothing else to sit on but the bottom of the boat. Coming home, the sea was still rough, and the wind dead ahead; so the crew had two very solid hours of rowing.

But excursions like these were only incidental, and the staple diet of Victoria Point was not imported whisky, but small beer. The place is well worth going to, if only for the voyage. I was delighted to see it, and perfectly content to come away after a month. In the dreary and superficially trivial round of office duties at Rangoon it was a welcome interlude, just as the war itself blew at least a radical change of existence into the lives of some once too academic soldiers. Some day Victoria Point may be developed, and rival Amherst as the watering-place of Burma. But I am glad that I saw it as it is still—simple, yet civilised, a little spot of Western leaven in the great indifferent lump of Eastern landscape, the last place in the Indian Empire —*ad fines Indiæ.*

R. H. D.

LORD KITCHENER AND THE ENGINEERING WORK OF THE WAR.

BY MAJOR-GENERAL SIR GEORGE K. SCOTT MONCRIEFF, K.C.B., K.C.M.G., C.I.E.

In the 'Life of Lord Kitchener,' which gives us such an admirable picture of the great leader, his work, and his character, it is pointed out that he owed much of his success to the fact that he had been an Engineer officer. This fact is not unduly laboured; to do so would have tended to obscure the broader and greater issues involved, and might have interfered with the due perspective with which we are called to contemplate his work as a whole, dealing as it did with many complex personal and national matters, in which technical knowledge had little part. Yet the early training which taught him to balance the end in view with the least means available — a training which constitutes the very essence of engineering science and practice — permeated the whole of his life's work, and produced a result which might not have been achieved had his early experience been different. It was by his own choice that he entered that branch of the army where this training was possible, and it was not until he had spent long years in carrying out useful technical work that he was called upon to a larger and wider sphere of public service.

It might have been expected that in the record of his work in the Great War some allusion would be made to the share which he took in the development of military engineering in a war where, as never before, that science came into play. That this is not the case is no cause of complaint. The work he did was so vast, the difficulties he had to overcome in other respects so stupendous, that they were in themselves quite sufficient to absorb the author's energies, and to demand our attention in the biography. It is well that these achievements should be presented for consideration rather than the comparatively minor part which belonged to the special branch of the profession in which he received his early training, and in which, in the war, he left his mark just as really as he did in the greater problems which devolved on him. It may, however, be permitted to one who was honoured in being at the head of that branch of the service under him during that period, and who enjoyed his confidence in such a position, to supplement what has been given to the world, and to tell something of that great mind which, while occupied with far wider issues, was ever cognisant of

the part that engineering had to play in the great conflict.

As in every other branch of the military profession, the war demanded military engineering on a scale far in excess of anything ever contemplated, and infinitely beyond anything ever actually carried out. The coast defence programme in these islands alone was greater even than the great scheme brought into play by Lord Palmerston's energy in the years following the Crimean War—a scheme which, fortifying the English Channel alone and a few other places near the Continent, was not complete when the Franco-German War broke out in 1870. The provision of hutting, which after the Boer War was confined to some few thousands of troops, was during the raising of the New Armies on a scale providing for hundreds of thousands. The materials required for the engineering works of the troops actually in the field, provided in England and sent all over the world, ran into tens and sometimes hundreds of thousands of tons every month. The personnel required for the execution of these works, in all their variety of specialised knowledge, went up by leaps and bounds from a small nucleus of some 6000 to what was in itself a vast army of 300,000. Moreover, all these varied needs had to be adapted to the circumstances and exigencies of the situations, and not merely a constant varying with the numbers of the troops and the weight of opposition expected. The problems were varied, the means were limited, but the end in view was the same—namely, the ultimate victory. He did not live to see the victory, but he provided the means.

His work in this respect began in the Coronation year, when he was called upon to be chairman of a Committee at the War Office dealing with engineering organisation. There had been in 1903 a change brought about by the Esher Committee, which affected the Engineers perhaps more than any other branch of the army. Up to that date the Inspector-General of Fortifications, one of the principal heads of the War Office organisation, and in close touch with the Secretary of State and his chief military advisers, was responsible for all engineering matters, and was the authorised inspector of all Engineer troops. The Esher Committee abolished this post, dividing up the duties among other members of the newly-formed Army Council. It is understood that this was done on the analogy of the navy: if so, it seems to have been forgotten that the conditions of land warfare differ from those at sea. Whatever may have been the intention, it soon became evident that the change produced unsatisfactory results. It involved a separation between the administrative control of works in peace and the combatant duties of the Royal Engineers in war, and the application of the science of

engineering to warlike purposes. It also produced friction in administration, and many complaints of a varied character. Consequently, the Secretary of State, in answer to questions in the House in 1911, stated that the whole subject was being referred to a Committee under the chairmanship of the most distinguished Engineer officer of the day.

Lord Kitchener assembled this committee early in May, and it sat twice a week, except during the actual Coronation time, until late in August. The terms of reference were very wide, comprising not only the numbers of Engineer units for varied work in the army, but the composition in detail of those units, the duties and training of both officers and men, the relations of military engineers to civil experience and civil engineers, the employment and organisation of works carried out in peace for the army, the system of signalling, and of the units composing the signal service, railways, coast defence, electric lights, and the technical troops required for all the above special branches, with the financial considerations involved in all of the above matters. There was an immense amount of detailed work involved, as well as broad questions of military policy: such as the organisation in war corresponding to the policy, then accepted, of an Expeditionary Force of six divisions.

To be member of such a committee under Lord Kitchener was no sinecure. He divided up the work into sections, allotting to each member certain portions which he had to work out in detail, and present to the chairman for careful discussion and deliberation. Nothing was allowed to be dealt with in a perfunctory manner, and, in addition to the evidence of many witnesses, previous reports of committees had to be searched and examined.

The members of the committee were all, with one exception, officers either on the headquarter staff or quartered in London. The one exception was the Chief Engineer of the Aldershot command, an appointment which I then held. At Aldershot, at that time, with the full concurrence and support of the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, we were endeavouring to train our R.E. field units, as far as our limited means admitted, in the application to military purposes of materials which hitherto had been considered entirely outside the sphere of field operations. We constructed field casemates (afterwards known in the war as "dug-outs") of concrete and steel. We built field bridges of steel girders and plates, and then blew them up. We improvised trench mortars—very crude affairs, but useful enough in their way. The underlying principle in all this was that we expected that in the next war we should have such forces brought against our works as could not be met

by the old-fashioned combinations of timber and brushwood. Moreover, we expected that we might have the resources of modern building and engineering materials of all sorts available, from which we could draw our supplies. Our aim, generally, was to bring into modern war the science and practice of civil engineering.

This, however, was not the view held by the General Staff, a distinguished member of which was one of the other members of the Kitchener Committee. He held—and this was (broadly speaking) the view of the General Staff up to 1914—that the increased range of modern weapons, and the increased facilities for moving troops, would involve operations at far greater distances than in former wars, and render engineering works so rarely necessary as to be hardly worth constructing. The experiences of South Africa and Manchuria, he held, had shown that field defences, although very valuable tactically, were principally those which could be hastily constructed, and hence skilled artisans would be rarely required—a few carpenters, perhaps, and possibly bricklayers, might be useful; but as for other trades, such as plumbers, draughtsmen, painters, &c., there could be no war employment for them, and to retain them in our field units was sheer waste of money. It is only fair to say that the distinguished officer in question, and also another equally eminent general, both of whom commanded armies in the war, afterwards expressed to me their complete change of views, as a result of the bitter experience of the war. One went so far as to say that he always told his corps commanders that the most important man in their corps was the Chief Engineer. Although this frank avowal of a past mistake was characteristic of the charming and chivalrous nature of the men who expressed it, the fact remains that we started the war with a heavy handicap owing to the mistake.

The controversy between these opposing schools of thought often waged hot. Lord Kitchener listened, as a rule, with a grim smile, not interfering with either. But he wanted more men and more units, and his sound economical mind realised at once that some compromise was needed, whereby the financial effect would be the same, though the ideal of perfection might not be attained. He therefore advocated a larger number of unskilled men, with a nucleus of tradesmen, and to pay for the increase he recommended certain drastic reductions in other matters.

Writing of the summer of 1911 brings to mind memories of many things—the splendid pageants of the Coronation, the beauties of the country near Aldershot, with hot field-days at Woolmer Forest and Chobham, the thoughts that we had of possibilities of fiercer and hotter conflicts overseas,

for the Agadir incident brought us very near to war; but to those of us who were associated with Lord Kitchener either on the Committee or in command of Coronation troops (and I was concerned in both), the recollection of his personality is perhaps the most important. I had served under him in India, but my duties were confined to one part of the N.-W. Frontier, and though there we realised that he, more than any of his predecessors, had taken pains to acquaint himself at first hand with the problems involved, yet naturally one saw little of him. He had, like Julius Cæsar (as quoted by Lord Haldane in his book, from the words of Mommsen), the quality "of discriminating between the possible and the impossible. . . . What was possible he performed, and never left the possible good undone for the sake of the impossible better." In his work, therefore, of the Committee in 1911, he recognised that a compromise between the extreme views of his colleagues was the practicable course to recommend, and this he did.

At the conclusion of our labours, one day, walking away with me, he said that it had been a long task, but he hoped it would result in good. When I expressed the fear that it might not be approved by higher authority at the War Office, he said that surely they would not have called on a man of his position to advise unless they meant to follow his advice. The argument was unanswerable, but I feared it might be otherwise.

And so it turned out. I was, very much to my regret, transferred from Aldershot to the War Office shortly afterwards, and there, naturally, watched the result with interest. The reductions which Lord Kitchener had recommended were at once carried out with avidity. The increases, for which these reductions were to pay, were shelved. Except for some improvements in the signal service, the branch of the army concerned was really in a worse state in 1914 than it was in 1911. A little had been done in the intervening years to train R.E. units in siege-works, and some increase was allowed in the quantity of explosives carried by field units, and the method of supplying them, matters which bore fruit in the early days of the war. In the main and essential features of the problem, no improvement was effected.

I was in Cairo in the early part of 1914, and briefly discussed the matter with him. As in all other, and more important, national questions, his loyalty to orders from above was always supreme, and he spoke about it without bitterness. He said, however, that he thought a grave mistake had been made, and that we should find it out when we went to war. I do not think that he ever imagined that it would fall to him to effect the change.

Then came the war. The Expeditionary Force mobilised and slipped over to France

with swiftness and secrecy. In some respects the employment of the best mechanical means for saving labour and money and time had been considered, but not even the greatest panegyrist of the General Staff would think of asserting that this consideration had gone beyond certain very limited, though important, applications of engineering to transportation, and certainly no one can say that the subject had been considered at all by the Staff in connection with the operations of battle. That the units of the Royal Engineers in the various divisions of the force were thoroughly efficient and well officered is admitted by the universal consent of the Army. But there was no higher organisation, no Engineer-in-Chief of the Force, and no Chief Engineers of Corps. There was at G.H.Q. a senior officer as "engineering adviser" attached to the Staff, and there were similar officers with each Army Corps. But the entire establishments of these functionaries consisted in each case of one soldier clerk, and the officers in question were advisers only, with no executive powers to purchase materials, hire labour, or carry out any work whatever. The contrast between their position and that which, at a later period of the war, was held by the Engineer-in-Chief at G.H.Q. with his large organisation of experts, and elaborate sections for defences, mining, water supply, &c., is very remarkable. At the beginning of the war all this was non-existent, and for all the good it had accomplished the Kitchener Committee of 1911 need never have assembled.

However, Lord Kitchener himself was now at the helm, and this was the best augury for the future. Not that in respect of improvement in the fighting line he could then effect anything. He had a far wider and bigger task in hand, and as the initiative in all matters concerning the fighting force had necessarily to come from the Commander-in-Chief in the field according as the necessities of war demanded, it was some months before the bitter experience of the trench warfare of the winter showed how lamentably deficient we were in the engineering branch of the army, and in our organisation for utilising the science of engineering to military needs.

Meantime there was engineering on a vast scale to be done at home. The first 100,000 of the new army sprung at once to arms at the call of the great leader. It had to be housed as well as clothed, fed, and armed. The housing of troops and selection of sites, &c., was then in the hands of what was, somewhat inappropriately, termed the Peace Distribution Committee, composed of representatives of nearly every branch of the War Office. A small sub-committee (one of whom, Colonel Pell, was killed a few months later when gallantly commanding a battalion of his regiment, the Queen's, against tremendous odds, but who then was on the training branch of

the General Staff) was scouring the country for suitable sites for hutted camps, and had just received a patriotic offer from Earl Brownlow, placing his beautiful park at Belton, in Lincolnshire, at their disposal. A contractor of world-wide experience offered his services in an executive capacity to Lord Kitchener. The technical staff of the War Office was busy, day and night, designing the details of the typical huts required. By the 14th of August the plans were ready and approved. But it was not an unqualified approval that Lord Kitchener gave. True to his invariable habit of weighing the end with the means, and careful to observe public economy, he at once asked for an estimate of the typical cost for a battalion of 1000 men with all the necessary accessories of water supply, drainage, roads, and lighting. On being told it would be £15,000, he at once said that it was too much, and that although the first lot might go on, care must be taken hereafter to reduce the cost. He only sanctioned such shelters as were a substitute for tents, and could be rapidly provided to serve for the emergency of the war only. It was pointed out to him that the coming winter would demand something better than the rough shelters he indicated, and that some of the amenities of life, such as recreation-rooms, would be required in addition to what was needed for health, and these arguments he admitted. But anything like permanent barracks or hutments were rigidly barred.

On the 23rd August, the first encampment for a division —the 11th, which afterwards was so terribly tried in Gallipoli—was begun at Belton Park. The work was completed in less than three months.

Lord Kitchener's biographer has related how on that memorable 23rd August it was discovered that the Germans' great outflanking movement was taking place, and how in the early hours of the 24th this serious menace was made known to Sir John French.

At 9 A.M., on the 24th, Lord Kitchener was in his place at the War Office and sent for me. I went along the passage expecting some further development of the hutting orders, but when I entered his room the first word he said was "Havre." Then he asked whether I had worked out any scheme for the defence of the base ports overseas. I replied that I had not, both because any operations in the field were outside the limits of my duty, and also because the initiative in such matters emanated from the General Staff. Then he asked me to name two of the best engineer officers I could lay my hands on, in order that they might be ordered without a minute's delay to proceed to France and work out schemes for defence of the base ports. I named two officers, one from Dover, another from Chatham, both of whom earned high distinction

afterwards in the war. I pointed out, however, to Lord Kitchener that the orders for them and for the whole scheme should emanate from the Chief of the Staff, and that the artillery for the defence would have to be settled by the Master-General of the Ordnance, whom indeed he had "short-circuited" by sending for me at all, as I was under the orders of that Member of Council. "I know that," he said, "but they (the C.I.G.S. and the M.G.O.) are not here yet, and we cannot lose a moment. Off you go and summon those officers, and tell the C.I.G.S. the orders I have given you." I went off accordingly, gave my message, got hold of plans of the base ports, and before noon had the two officers in question from Dover and Chatham and some others (subsequently ordered by the C.I.G.S.) despatched with full instructions what to do. They were away for about a week, and if, as Lord Kitchener evidently expected, the Germans had advanced on our base ports, the defences would have had to be pushed on night and day, in consultation, no doubt, with the French local authorities. But, strange to say, the Germans missed a chance such as they never had again of seizing the Channel ports. We now know that von Kluck imagined he had entirely cut off our communications—whereas, by utilising our naval power, we transferred our base to the Loire, a splendid feat of organisation to which sufficient credit has never (I venture to think) been given to the Inspector-General of Communications, Sir F. Robb. Anyhow, Lord Kitchener at once saw the danger, and took steps to minimise it at once.

The Peace Distribution Committee was not allowed to continue its labours in selecting sites for hutted camps. It was abolished, and the question of sites was placed under the Quartermaster-General. The rapid development of the new armies necessitated more, and yet more, hutted camps, and endeavour was made to meet Lord Kitchener's wishes as to cheapening them. He saw some of these first built, and said they were too good, and that they took too long to build. So every possible means was taken to cut down cost and labour; but the position of many of the sites, either far from railways or else in the vicinity of camps already occupied by troops, and therefore congested with men, stores, &c., made the introduction of economies very difficult.

One day in September, when things in France were looking a little better, but still full of anxiety, he sent for me and gave me the surprise of my life. He said, "I want to consult you about some work I am doing at my place in Kent. My architect has sent me drawings of a door leading on to the rose-garden," and so on, calmly discussing the details of an improvement in a country house, with great evidence of taste and culture,

but hardly the sort of thing to be expected from the War Minister of our country in the throes of a life-and-death struggle. I think he forced himself to do this, just to relieve his mind of the strain of the war.

About that time we were bombarded at the War Office by ingenious inventors and their friends, who apparently thought we had not enough work to do. Lord Kitchener must have had an enormous number of these, but he passed on very few of them. It was difficult sometimes not to take notice of them, when such a letter as the following came in: "I send you a memo. from Sir ——, the great specialist in ——. He thinks that his invention will solve a most difficult problem in military operations, and he will be delighted to discuss (or he proposes to come at 3 on Tuesday next to discuss) the matter with you. I am sure you will receive him with the courtesy his eminent services and scientific attainments deserve." Later on, the Munitions Inventions Department gave one most welcome relief from this sort of thing, but at one time it was a terrible burden, especially as about 95 per cent of the proposals were hopeless. But if Lord Kitchener kept his subordinates from being pestered by these busybodies, it does not mean that he was indifferent to the utilisation of inventions. Sometimes he would ask, "What are you doing about wireless (or searchlights, or bridging)?" and he satisfied himself thus that we were alive to outside influences and ready to use them. So it was with regard to Tanks in the early developments. The Navy was certainly ahead of us in this matter, and therefore he quite agreed to their being left to work out the problem; but I do not think, otherwise, he would have been satisfied with the answer that it was insoluble.

About the end of November 1914 the Q.M.G. had come to the end of his proposals as regards sites for camps, and still more were wanted. Lord Kitchener sent for me and for some of the Q.M.G.'s staff, and said he wanted to build for six more divisions, 120,000 men. I suggested the Heythrop country in Oxfordshire, where we had been on autumn manœuvres in 1909, or the Bedale country in Yorkshire. "Oxfordshire, Yorkshire," he said, rather pathetically; "I have been so long abroad that I don't know England at all. You go off (to me) to Yorkshire at once, and you (to one of the Q.M.G.'s staff) to Oxfordshire, and let me have schemes early next week. You know Aldershot, of course (to me), well; it had to be turned into permanent barracks from huts at great expense some 40 years after it was built. See if you can't build a camp in Yorkshire so that, if need be, after the war, we may have an Aldershot in the north. We need something of the kind there badly." I do not know whether the Q.M.G. consulted the Master of the Heythrop,

but the idea of a hutment in that district never came off. As, however, I hold that nobody can know a district so well as a master of hounds, I wired to the M.F.H. of the Bedale to meet me and some representatives of the General and Medical Staffs at Ripon, and we spent a few days examining the country between that little cathedral town and Richmond. I had the plans ready for Lord Kitchener in a few days, and he agreed to our trying "an Aldershot in the north," near Richmond, at the camp now called Catterick, where the huts are all built of concrete, and the whole town of 40,000 men (2 divisions) is self-contained, *i.e.*, with its own water supply, sewage scheme, electric light, hospital, railway, roads, and two churches (subscribed for by the Yorkshire people). At Ripon, a little town normally of some 8000, the presence of a military camp of 40,000 must have been rather startling; but the problem there was not so complex as at Richmond, for many of the accessories, *e.g.*, roads and water supply, already existed. The cost of the latter was little more than the former.

Meantime in France our troops were badly in need of engineer stores and of labour. We sent over during the winter 1914-15 about 40,000 pumps of sorts to help to keep the trenches reasonably dry, and the vast quantity of loopholed plates, barbed wire, timber, steel joists, corrugated-iron sheets, and a host of other things, is beyond the power of my pen to describe. There was no executive control, however, and soon this want had to be remedied. Lord Kitchener's proposals of 1911, which were modest beginnings of the solution, were carried into effect, and a proper system of superintendence was inaugurated. Pioneer battalions, on the system adopted in India, were authorised for each division, and proved most valuable. Field engineers and assistant field engineers, also an Indian arrangement, were appointed. These were officers of practical experience, either civil or military engineers, who were not attached to units, but had the task of executing works—roads, water supplies, defences, &c.—by civil labour. Most valuable work was done by these officers in all parts of the theatre of war. A proper system of supply of stores was also worked out, and was working admirably when I was in France in the autumn of 1915. In the summer of 1915, labour battalions were recruited in England from navvies employed on our large public works. These were men too old to be enlisted in the fighting units. They were not supposed to be taken over fifty-five (I quote from memory and may be wrong), but there were certainly many over sixty. All the officers were civil engineers, architects, surveyors, or in some cognate profession. These also did admirable work. More dan-

gerous work, however, was done by the miners, or Tunnelling Companies, as they were called, raised first by the energy of Colonel Sir John Norton Griffiths, M.P. These were all officered by mining engineers, and the men were miners, from our coal districts chiefly. Then there were quarrying companies for working the French quarries, land drainage companies from the Fen districts, who, in the second winter of the war, took in hand the drainage all round Armentières and Givenchy, and forestry companies, who tackled the difficult problem of supplying timber. These, and many other specialists, gradually came into being as the war progressed, during Lord Kitchener's rule.

The Dardanelles work presented very special difficulty, both because it could not be foreseen what the nature of the operations would be, and also because few if any of the engineers employed — some coming from India, some from other colonies, and some from England—had any experience of modern warfare as it had developed in France. Lord Kitchener at once put his finger on this weak spot, and before he left for his memorable visit to Gallipoli, he sent for me to discuss the matter. I had just returned from some weeks in France, where I had gone, at the time of the battle of Loos, to consider the whole question of engineering in the field, and where I found that our people were making most thorough and excellent use both of local resources and these which were sent out from home. Lord Kitchener asked me to name some special officer of energy, and experience in fighting, who could go to the Dardanelles and advise as to their field defences there. I named one who was then in France, but who at the outbreak of the war was in the Sudan, and had special experience among Eastern peoples—an experience which at once appealed to Kitchener. He told me to see that orders were sent to this officer, and he also directed that I should arrange for a depot for all engineer stores at Alexandria, so that any demands from forces operating in the Eastern Mediterranean, or even in East Africa, might be supplied from there. This was a very useful move, and it bore fruit for the rest of the war.

The officer sent to the Dardanelles never landed there, for by the time he was due Lord Kitchener had decided to withdraw, and to have a defensive line made about six miles to the east of the Suez Canal, so this officer's services were retained for that task. Meantime a telegram was sent to us at home to send out engineer stores for a complete line of redoubts, &c., in the desert, covering the Canal, a demand which we were able to work out and comply with at once, except in two important particulars — viz., light railways and water-supply pipes. As regards the former, the material was already in Egypt by a curious combina-

tion of circumstances. Early in the war a Siege Committee sat at the War Office (as related in Lord Kitchener's Life, when dealing with the question of siege artillery). This committee recommended the immediate purchase of many engineering stores and plant—among other things, 100 miles of light railway, many petrol-driven locomotives, and other rolling stock—and these were purchased at once. However, for some reason best known to himself, the Q.M.G. would not use this light railway in France, and so we sent it out with all its rolling stock to Egypt, where we felt sure that, sooner or later, it would come in useful. And undoubtedly it saved the situation there. The supply of water-pipes and pumps was not so easy. We needed over 100 miles of pipes 4 inches in diameter, and they had to be of steel with special joints, for the ordinary cast-iron pipes which we use in England would be too brittle and take far too long to put down. Now at that time all the available steel pipes in England were being sent to France (where in the Somme battlefield alone 120 miles were put down), and the supply for Egypt was a serious problem. We got some from Karachi and Bombay, some from Rotterdam; but the bulk of the order had to be placed in America, and two shiploads of pipes left Baltimore early in December. The Germans got wind of this, and tried to torpedo the ships, and did sink the P. & O. *Persia* about that time, possibly by mistake. The consignment arrived all right; and the whole line of defences was rapidly complete early in 1916, the first step towards the great defeat of the enemy on that front.

Sir George Arthur tells us that the large water-main which was subsequently laid across the desert to the borders of Palestine was Lord Kitchener's scheme also. It may be so, and is quite in accordance with the far-reaching nature of his great mind. But it was not until after his death—I think about August 1916—that the matter was first referred to me, in a private letter from the G.O.C., Egypt, asking if I thought we could possibly get the pipes—12 inches in diameter, and some ninety miles of them—and the pumps. We were able to get them from America, and the whole colossal scheme was successfully carried out, so that in February 1917 the Nile water flowed into Palestine. This, however, belongs to that part of the war history which came later.

I saw very little of Lord Kitchener after his return from the East, for I was much away from the War Office in the early months of 1916—partly in France, looking into questions of bridges for the hoped-for advance, and also into matters connected with the huge water-supply problems which were expected in the Somme fighting. I was also at Paris, discussing with some of my colleagues and with the French authorities ques-

tions about quarries and forests, at the French War Office. On return home, the progress of the East Coast defences was such that I was necessarily often at the Humber and the Forth, though by that time the chances of hostile naval attack were becoming less and less.

It was, therefore, not in London that the terrible, the incredible, news came to me that he, the great leader, had fallen. We were fain to comfort ourselves with the thought that he had done his work, and that it could now be safely left to others.

But looking back, one sees that the calamity was far worse than we then imagined.

The New Armies that he had created came brilliantly into action at the Somme, as indeed some of them had done before at Loos. News from Egypt counterbalanced the serious reverses at Gallipoli and in Mesopotamia. And so the autumn passed, and then with October came the wettest season and coldest winter—the dark and sorrowful winter of 1916-17.

Then we began to realise our loss.

He had come like a wind from the east, keen, sharp, and penetrating, but wholesome and invigorating, among fogs and miasma. And in that winter the fog began to creep over us again.

Readers of Queen Victoria's letters will remember how she insisted on the plans and schemes of large important works being submitted to her, how she chafed at Lord Palmerston for his delay about Netley Hospital, and how she urged Lord Herbert to bring her plans of the cavalry barracks at Aldershot. I have seen plans of even minor forts bearing Her Majesty's signature.

Such centralisation is of course to be deprecated, and no one would now think of adding this task to the huge burden already borne by the sovereign. But it seems as if we have now gone to the other extreme. Except to Lord Kitchener, I have never had to show or explain to any Secretary of State any of the large works or plans carried out under my orders, nor have I been ordered to attend for this purpose any meeting of the Army Council.

Some seventy years ago Professor Tyndall seriously recommended that every candidate for Parliament should pass a qualifying examination in natural science. As we all know, our legislators, our budding Cabinet Ministers, our future Secretaries of State and guardians of the public purse, pass no such examination—their sole qualification being their ability to talk, *vox et præterea nihil.* Why this should be a preliminary requisite to administrative power is one of the anomalies of our constitution, and is a tribute to our national power of "muddling through." But when we do get a man of deeds and science, not of words, his worth is incalculable.

Of the six Secretaries of

State for War under whom I served, one was Lord Kitchener, one was the genial nobleman afterwards in charge of British interests in Paris, and the remaining four were lawyers, very distinguished statesmen no doubt, but imbued with the legal frame of mind which, in administrative affairs, is so apt to regard each question not on its intrinsic merits, but in the light of its effect upon the judge and jury; in other words, its value in votes in the House, and its effect on the fortunes of Great Diana of the Ephesians—the political party in power.

When one has to serve under a man like Lord Kitchener, after experience of the others, it is all the difference between light and darkness, between clear strong guidance from above, and wild extravagant ventures like those which came to light at Loch Doon and Chippenham.

THE HERITAGE OF THE SUN.

[The Rajputs (literally Sons of Kings) are an immigrant race into India from the plains of Central Asia, and are considered to be of Scythic origin. They adopted the Hindu religion, became the rulers of most of Northern India, and continued so until the Muhammadan invasion. According to their traditions their three main clans are descended from the Sun, the Moon, and the Sacred Pit of Fire. The Solar race are considered to be the eldest line, and the Sesodias are the eldest branch of that line. Of the Sesodias the head is the Maharana of Udaipur. His ancestors put up a stout fight against the Muhammadans, and their former capital, Chitor, was sacked "2½ times" as they reckon. On each occasion the heir to the throne was sent away with a small party. The women were burnt on funeral pyres, and the men, putting on their saffron robes in token of their devotion to death, marched out of the city into the midst of their foes and were all slain.

One of the customs of the Princes of Udaipur and other Rajput states is the evening feeding of the wild animals in the jungles adjoining their Palaces.]

WHERE enchantment's marble isles,
With airy domes on pillars light,
Seek deep within the limpid lake
The image of their radiance white:
Where, like rain-fretted pinnacles
Of bergs that drift to tropic seas,
The fairy palace cupolas
Sway gently in the scented breeze:
Where, green beneath the autumn rains,
The shaggy hills stretch out their arms
To clasp the closer to their breast
The Naiad of a thousand charms:
Where sambhur, boar, and shy gazelle,
At bugle-call steal slowly down
To feast upon the rich largesse
Of monarchs of the solar crown:
High on a jutting battlement,
The eldest of the Sun's own breed
Watches, like his great ancestor,
The lowest of his subjects feed:
The inbred fineness of his blood
Imprinted on his musing face,
He sits and dreams of all the past,
Of all the future of his race:
How they reach through the mist of years
To the great God, who lights the world:
How from high Asia's wind-scoured steppes
Smoke of their camps to heaven upcurled:

How, through the passes of the North,
With sword and spear they thrust their way,
And over India's fabled plains
Stretched far and wide their royal sway:
How they built up a commonwealth,
Each caste in its due order placed,
Each man content to tread the path
His father had before him traced:
How, when the bigot Moslem hordes
Closed on their hill-set capital,
They donned their saffron robes, and fell,
With solemn joy, as heroes fall,
To save from sacrilegious hands
Of alien foes, with fury blind,
The secrets of their ancient faith,
The honour of their womenkind:
How warriors from strange Western isles
Imposed on all their iron will,
And quelled a seething continent
With their imperious "Peace, be still":
How India's first great Empress-Queen,
In mother-love made solemn pact
To cherish and protect her sons
And guard her Princes' rights intact:
Yet, how the wisdom of the West,
Transplanting an exotic shoot,
Bewildered, saw the sapling bend
Beneath sedition's baleful fruit:
How, though war's fiery test assayed
Ind's soldier sons as tempered steel,
Now, they must 'bate their pride and crouch
Beneath a slippered clerkly heel,
And immemorial Kings must bow
To subtle scribes of days gone by:
"Never!" outflamed the Sun-god's sword,
"My children still know how to die."

RAJPUT.

MUSINGS WITHOUT METHOD.

THE INDEPENDENCE OF EGYPT—SHIRKING OUR RESPONSIBILITIES—WHAT NAPOLEON AND THE GERMANS THOUGHT—THE OPINION OF MR ALFRED MILNER AND LORD CROMER—THE LORD MAYOR OF CORK—THE HUMOUR OF MR AND MRS WEBB—A NEW CONSTITUTION—THE KING AND TWO HOUSES OF COMMONS—THE FAILURE OF PEDANTRY—WHAT BRITONS WILL NOT ENDURE.

It is not easy to detect a harmonious plan in the confused policy of our present governors. At the very moment at which they are assuming fresh responsibilities in Palestine and Mesopotamia, against the will of the Arabs, they are discarding elsewhere the burdens which it is their imperative duty to carry. They have stripped from Ireland the last semblance of government. Light-heartedly and at the command of Mr Gandhi, the proclaimed friend of Mr E. S. Montagu, they have inaugurated what is ominously called "a new era" in India. And now after India comes Egypt. Egypt also is on the verge of a "new era." She is to be given complete independence, and without tradition and without training she will come forth a full-blown democracy; and Germany may be once more congratulated on having won in defeat what she hardly dared to hope might be the fruit of victory.

The value of Egypt, especially to the British Empire, cannot be over-rated. "Egypt," said Napoleon, "is the most important country in the world." It was his constant ambition to make through Egypt an attack upon India. Not even Nelson's triumph in Aboukir Bay distracted his glance wholly from the Orient. In his love of romance he delighted to picture himself as the Emperor of the East, as a modern Alexander the Great. He mourned bitterly, in the seclusion of St Helena, over his lost opportunity. He regretted again and again that he ever left Egypt, and he was sure that had he made himself Emperor of the East he would have still been upon the throne. His imagination worked easily when in memory he contemplated the Orient. "Arabia awaits a man," said he; "with the French in reserve and the Arabs as auxiliaries I should have seized Judea, I should have been master of the East." Above all, he knew full well whither the domination of Egypt would have led him. He saw clearly that if France were mistress of Egypt she would be mistress of India. "If once Egypt were in possession of the French," said he, "farewell India to the British. This was one of the great projects which I aimed at."

Napoleon, of course, was in the right of it. The power which masters Egypt masters

India also and much else besides. Nor were the Germans slow to learn the lessons which Napoleon taught them. For many years they have kept their eyes fixed upon the key of our Eastern Empire. Long before the war they were busy in Egypt. Their system of peaceful penetration was complete. They had established schools, where were taught and learned the true lessons of *Kultur*. Their spies covered the land with their accustomed industry, and would doubtless have been a far greater danger had they not been German spies. But their failure was not intentional, and when the war broke out the Germans hoped that they had broken down with what subtlety they might the moral defences of Egypt. They had been trained by Bismarck in the proper school of thought; for though "the maker of modern Germany" was ever a bad prophet in the East, though he believed in 1882 that Arabi could not be defeated, and hoped three years later that "Wolseley's head would soon arrive in Cairo, nicely pickled and packed," he did not underrate the importance of Egypt. "Egypt," he once said, "is as necessary to England as her daily bread." And again: "Egypt is of the utmost importance to England on account of the Suez Canal, the shortest line of communication between the eastern and western halves of the Empire." Such were the lessons which Bismarck taught; and his unworthy successors, though, happily for us, they could not profit by them, at least learned them patiently by heart.

It is interesting to read, now that the war is over, the plans which the Germans cherished of annexation. The moment had come, they thought, when they would inherit the whole earth. Wherever the sun rose or set there should be the German flag fluttering in the breeze. The only question which divided these amateurs, was precisely how much of the world they should lay their hands upon. Some were satisfied with the French coast as far as the Somme. Others thought it prudent to include Bordeaux or even Toulon in the new map of Germany. But all were agreed that to deprive England of Egypt would be a fitting end to a victorious war. The loss of England should surely be Germany's gain. "The day on which England sees herself face to face with ruin in Egypt and in the world, will be the birthday of the new trans-oceanic Germany." Thus said Dr Rohrbach, and he had good reason for the faith which was in him. And Herr Jäckh posed the argument at another angle. "If you asked an English statesman," said he, "which would be more easily supportable—an anti-English Calais or a non-English Suez, he would renounce Calais without a moment's hesitation, and would insist upon keeping Suez. From Calais England might be pestered, wounded; at Suez she would be beaten,

killed. Calais does not affect the great world-wide British Empire. Suez cuts the only direct line of communication between European England and her African, Asiatic, and Australian Empire; it affects her vital nerve." What, then, asked Herr Jäckh, was to be done? He had no difficulty in answering the question himself. "The world war," said he, "has now for its object to win for us the regions which lie between the Dardanelles and Suez. We must organise thoroughly a Turkey rich and strong, thanks to German toil, and guard our ever increasing Germany against English hostility by ensuring a perpetual menace to the centre of the English world in front of, or even at, Suez itself."

It is well to recall what were the amiable intentions and the joyous hopes of the Germans, not only because we may shape our policy by them, but because, having dreamed the wildest dreams of universal dominion, they now protest bitterly against the smallest attempt to bring their headstrong folly to account. We can best judge our own clemency by comparing the world as it is to-day with what it would have been had the Germans won the war. And the opinions set forth by Dr Rohrbach and Herr Jäckh were not theirs alone. They were shared eagerly by Germans of all kinds and all classes. We remember, for instance, the famous manifesto of Professor Oncken and his colleagues—a document which for insolence and cynicism has never been, never will be, surpassed. After having expressed their amiable intention to keep Belgium, to "correct" their whole frontier from Belfort to the sea, to lay hands upon some of the Channel ports, they turned their thoughts to Egypt. "As to Egypt," wrote the professorial fire-eaters, "which unites English Africa with English Asia, and which with far-distant Australia makes an English sea of the Indian Ocean, Egypt, which forms a link between the Mother Country and all her eastern colonies, it is, as Bismarck said, "the nape of England's world empire, it is the *crampon* by which England subdues the Eastern and the Western world to its arbitrary power." The professors would no longer permit this subjugation, and they knew how to put an end to it. "It is there, in Egypt, that the vital nerve of England can be struck! If that succeeds the world route of the Suez Canal will be liberated from the dominion of one power, and the ancient rights of Turkey will be re-established as much as possible."

The last sentence is, of course, pure hypocrisy. The Germans did not care a fig for Turkey, and their sole purpose was to substitute the German for the English power. But the passages which we have quoted show us with what clearness our enemies envisaged the question of Egypt, and it will doubtless be a

matter of vast satisfaction to them that, even after defeat, they will have their way, at least partially. In accordance with its usual policy, the Government has confronted us with an accomplished fact. It has not taken the people into its confidence, it has not sought the opinion of the country. When the egregious Mr E. S. Montagu had made up his mind to hand over India to Mr Gandhi and his friends, he sprung his purpose suddenly upon the nation, and declared that, on account of a single answer to a casual question asked in the House of Commons, opposition to the scheme which he had fathered would be an act of bad faith. It is an ill method of government, and it has an awkward look, when it is followed by the avowed champions of democracy. And the same method has been followed in Egypt. Half a dozen wiseacres have framed, in fear, a brand new scheme, and those who dare to oppose it will presently be told that they are endangering the peace of the world. Its purpose, it will be said, is to strengthen the bonds of goodwill between England and Egypt. A new friendship, we shall be assured by our Ministers, will be formed between the two countries. And even the Ministers, when they repeat the formula, will know that it is baseless. No friendship ever was, or ever will be, built upon a weak foundation, and we are giving Egypt her independence at this moment, not because we believe it to be the right thing to do, but because we shrink from holding fast to our firm time-honoured policy. Egypt will not love us the more; she will merely honour us the less for our conduct. We are breaking faith with the Arabs in Mesopotamia, we are pursuing a mad will-o'-the-wisp in Palestine, and we can no longer trouble our heads about the security of Egypt, of which, said Bismarck, already cited, England has a greater need than of her daily bread.

What, then, is to be done in the name of "self-determination," that dangerous formula, invented in Germany for the dismemberment of the British Empire, and thrust upon the father of all evil—President Wilson? Great Britain will recognise the independence of Egypt and will guarantee her integrity against foreign aggression. In exchange for these boons Great Britain will be permitted access to Egyptian territory in case of war, and will also maintain a garrison in the Canal zone. There the connection between England and Egypt will cease, and time will show whether "the spinal cord" of the British Empire is sufficiently defended against the breakage of our enemies. For the rest Egypt will go her own way at home and abroad. There will be no more British advisers, except one, who will watch over the Public Debt Commission, and another who will supervise such legislation as affects foreigners. The capitulations are to be abolished, as should

have been done long since, and Egypt will control her own foreign policy and send abroad her own diplomatic representatives. Only one concession seems to be made to Great Britain: the rights of present British officials will be safeguarded, and those of them who prefer not to serve under Egyptian heads of departments will be generously compensated.

Now, even the politicians who defend the secret and sudden action of the British Government do not pretend that the change will enhance the happiness or the prosperity of Egypt. The Egyptians are not trained in the wiles and tricks of democracy, and since, of course, they will enjoy all the blessings of popular government, since they will start at the point whereat we have arrived after centuries of experience, the result of the hazardous experiment can easily be foreseen. Nor can the debt which Egypt owes to England be easily estimated. We have brought the Egyptians out of the land of bankruptcy and set their feet upon the solid rock of health and wealth. We have built the dam at Assouan and given fertility to the Egyptian soil. And we take our dismissal without reason and without argument. The work which has been done by English wisdom and English courage goes for naught. It may well be in vain that Lord Cromer worked and Gordon died. Nor can the plea be advanced that the war has completely changed the situation. If there has been any change, it has been, from England's point of view, a change for the worse. And the reckless Ministers who are responsible for the new policy can find neither comfort nor support in the settled and recorded opinions of Mr Alfred Milner and Lord Cromer.

Let us turn, for instance, to Mr Milner's well-known book, 'England in Egypt.' That distinguished statesman was resolute upon one point—that it was impossible to say when our work in Egypt would be finished. "The truth is," he wrote, "that the idea of a definite date for the conclusion of our work in Egypt is wholly misleading. The withdrawal of Great Britain, if it is not to end in disaster, can only be a gradual process." So far as we can understand the purpose of our present Government, there will be nothing gradual in the process. Our retirement is to be sudden and complete. Then, proceeds Mr Milner, "no doubt the presence of the troops is even now an important element in the maintenance of our influence. . . . Nor can retirement at any time be contemplated without uneasiness. But it does not follow that if, for whatever reasons, it should be thought desirable to withdraw the troops at some future date, our influence would necessarily suffer. No doubt it would, if they were withdrawn in deference to menaces — if any one could say that we had been pushed

out." That is precisely what every one can and will say. We have been pushed out by the menaces of Zaghlul and his friends. We have not gone at our own time, but at theirs. And our departure is a triumph not of British policy but of Egyptian nationalism.

Even if we had withdrawn our troops at our own free will, it would still be necessary, thought Mr Milner, "that the position of the British officers in the Egyptian Army should be maintained." That position is not likely to be maintained. And Mr Milner closed his argument by asserting that the case for perseverence held the field. "If it can be proved," he wrote, "and I maintain it is proved, that we have been true to the spirit of our declarations, and that the literal fulfilment of them would be fraught with ruin to the Egyptian people, and with mischief to Great Britain and to Europe, then we are undoubtedly justified in persevering in the course on which we are engaged." As we were justified then, so we should be to-day, if we had not renounced our responsibility under pressure. Our governors do not seem to care whether the Egyptian people be ruined or not. The word "self-determination" has been whispered in their ears by interested Germans, and they have forgottten that ever they assumed the burden of governing Egypt with wisdom and justice.

Whether Lord Milner is in agreement with Mr Alfred Milner or not we do not know. There is not much doubt what Lord Cromer's opinion would be. "Is it," he asks, "possible to ensure the existence of a fairly good and stable government in Egypt if the British garrison were withdrawn? That is the main question that has to be answered. . . . I can only state my deliberate opinion, formed after many years of Egyptian experience and in the face of a decided predisposition to favour the policy of evacuation, that at present, and for a long time to come, the results of executing such a policy would be disastrous. Looking to the special intricacies of the Egyptian system of government, to the licence of the local press, to the ignorance and credulity of the mass of the Egyptian population, to the absence of Egyptian statesmen capable of controlling Egyptian society and of guiding the very complicated machine of government . . . it appears to me impossible to blind oneself to the fact that, if the British garrison were now withdrawn, a complete upset would probably ensue. . . . A transfer of power to the present race of Europeanised Egyptians would, to say the least, be an extremely hazardous experiment—so hazardous, indeed, that I am very decidedly of opinion that it would be wholly unjustifiable to attempt it." Lord Cromer wrote these words twelve years ago, and events have made what seemed unjustifiable then far less justifiable to-day. And

that there might be no uncertainty, Lord Cromer brought that part of his argument to an end with these memorable words: "It may be that at some future period the Egyptians may be rendered capable of governing themselves without the presence of a foreign army in their midst, and without foreign guidance in civil and military affairs; but that period is far distant. One or more generations must, in my opinion, pass away before the question can be even usefully discussed." Twelve years have passed away, and the question has not been discussed; it has been settled without discussion, and in a sense which Lord Cromer would justly and indubitably have deplored.

We can no longer hope for any sense of proportion in the treatment of public affairs. The essential and superfluous long since changed places, and nobody can be sure of universal applause save the convicted criminal. Some eighty brave and honest members of the Royal Irish Constabulary have been foully assassinated this year for no other reason than that they have done their duty. They have gone to their graves unhonoured and unsung. The rascals who are responsible for their deaths, and who intend, if they can, to set up an independent republic in Ireland, utter no word of protest. Fine governors they would make, whose hands are foully stained with the blood of innocent men! And then the Lord Mayor of Cork, caught red-handed in treachery, is condemned to a modest term of two years, and makes up his mind to commit suicide. Food is provided for him and he refuses to eat it. Instantly a clamour strikes the sky in all quarters. We are told by hundreds who should know better that it is the Government's duty to enlarge the man at once, to implore him to return in freedom to his own home, that his health may be comfortably restored. Alas! the eighty murdered men are beyond recall, and as they died with no halo of crime about their heads, they are not worth considering. Besides, their deaths were involuntary. They had no thought of suicide. And here is a Lord Mayor of Cork, who is obviously worth far more than eighty or a hundred servants of the crown, condemning himself to death because he objects to being in prison. What mercy was shown to the gallant soldier who was massacred as he stood in his club? He was not given even the option of a hunger strike.

Now what happened to the Lord Mayor of Cork was not of national importance. If he chose to starve himself to death, and if he could square the sin of suicide with the tenets of his Church, there was not another word to say. And what happened? The press, which should have known better, wrote daily leaders, published daily bulletins, and set a criminal upon a throne of martyrdom. The Americans, after their in-

variable fashion, found in a trivial incident another chance of insulting Great Britain, and heaped upon us the flattery of their insults. In brief, all the world of fools and sentimentalists, whose sympathy is always with the murderer and never with the murderer's victim, made a public advertisement of their fatuity, and left us with the pleasant calculation that the deliberate suicide of a Lord Mayor is a far worse blot upon those who tried their best to thwart it than is the cruel murder of eighty honest men upon those who brutally and cunningly contrived it.

So we live in a world of topsy-turveydom. So, when honour is to be done to the narrow-minded fanatics now called the Pilgrim Fathers, it is the Earl of Reading, a nobleman of Jewish blood, who is despatched to Plymouth, that he may make an appropriate oration upon the rebellious Christians of three centuries ago. The Pilgrims were solemn gentlemen no doubt, but even they, if they could look upon the earth, would laugh at the pompous incongruity. Lord Reading and the Pilgrim Fathers! There has been no episode like it since Sir Alfred Moritz Mond described Stonehenge as the place in which "our ancestors" worshipped.

But for sheer lack of humour we have seen nothing for many a day fit to be compared with a book entitled 'A Constitution for the Socialist Commonwealth,' by Sidney and Beatrice Webb (London: Longmans, Green, & Co.) Everything in this work is cut and dried. The authors live and move in a vacuum. The book is close and stuffy from beginning to end, as though it had been written in a house where the windows were never opened, and where the sun had never a chance to penetrate. And the whole argument is based upon a misstatement. "The manual-working wage-earners, comprising two-thirds of the population, obtain for their maintenance much less than half the community's net product annually." So say Mr and Mrs Webb, and we prefer to accept the evidence gathered by Mr A. L. Bowley in his analysis of the national income before the war. In 1911, he tells us, that 42 per cent of the aggregate income was paid in wages, and 42 per cent cannot be described as "much less than half."[1] And this is not all. The amount of old-age pensions, free education, and free meals at school, must be included in the sum paid to the wage-earners. And if, as we should, we class with the wage-earners those who are in receipt of salaries less than £160 a year, we shall find, with

[1] It is noteworthy that before Mr Bowley published his analysis, Mr and Mrs Webb roundly asserted that "two-thirds of the population, that is to say, the manual workers, obtain for all their needs only one-third of the produce of each year's work." They have modified their statement now, but not enough.

Mr Bowley, that more than 60 per cent of the whole income of the country is in the hands of the wage-earning class. Such were the figures before the war. Since the war the balance in favour of the wage-earners has appreciably increased. Moreover, from the 40 per cent remaining, in Mr Bowley's words, "a great part of national saving is made and a large part of national expenses is met; when these are subtracted, only £200 to £250 millions remain, which on the extremest reckoning can have been spent out of home-produced income by the rich or moderately well-off on anything of the nature of luxury." In brief, says Mr Bowley, "the spendable wealth of the nation derived from home industry has been grossly exaggerated by loose reasoning," and if we would be better off there is but one thing to do: employers and employed alike must increase production.

But Mr and Mrs Webb dislike those who are better off than their fellows as bitterly as they grudge them the reward of their own brains or of their parents' intelligence and thrift. "The continued existence of the functionless rich," they say, without explaining where they are to be found, "of persons who deliberately live by owning instead of by working, and whose futile occupations"—(why futile, Mrs Webb, why futile?)—"often licentious pleasures and inherently insolent manners, undermine the intellectual and moral standards of the community, adds insult to injury." It adds insult only to those who are consumed by envy. And what do this couple mean by licentious pleasures and insolent manners? Where have they lived all these years, blind or blinkered? Do they really still believe in the wicked baronet? What people have they known, what books have they read? Perhaps they spurn literature as anti-democratic; if they do not, then we suppose that Mrs Webb has dedicated her leisure to penny novelettes, and Mr Webb counts among his favourites Tom Wildrake and Jack Harkaway. And if Mr and Mrs Webb consider it a crime in others to own anything, we have a right to ask them if they themselves are guiltless. Are they owners, or have they lived by the sweat of their brows? They cannot evade the question by saying that in a socialist state they would pool their wealth. We make our own crimes, and if Mr and Mrs Webb are the owners of a single sovereign which they have not earned, they must be criminals in their own eyes as they are hypocrites in ours.

However, the State, directed and advised by Mr and Mrs Webb, has not the spending of the £200 to £250 millions which "on the extremest reckoning can have been spent on anything of the nature of luxury," and to lay hands upon that sum they are prepared to plunge the country into a sea of blood. For it is quite clear that the revolution sketched by these two "humourists" will not be a peaceful revolution. There are still men and

women left in England whose ideal of life is not the caboose, who hate uniformity as they hate slavery, who are determined to guard their personal liberty, and who will resist spoliation as they will resist the drab uniformity of the jail. Whether Mr Webb or Mrs Webb possesses the cold fanaticism which has enabled their great exemplar, Lenin, to ruin Russia for the sake of pedantry and his own glorification, we do not know. There is no doubt that, if they attempted to put their plans into practice here, a long, bitter, and bloody war would be the result.

They are kind enough to say that they will not instantly strip their victims. "Much as the moralists may condemn 'living by owning,'" they say, "it is not only humane but also expedient, and moreover, in the long-run, less costly to the community, to treat fairly, and even liberally, not merely every employee whose livelihood is disturbed, but each particular owner as he is dispossessed." Jonathan Wild has not often used words more sweetly honeyed. The honey, of course, is very thinly coated. The fair and liberal treatment of which they speak will depend entirely upon the property owners themselves. "They will, in short, be allowed gradually to extinguish each other's private ownership over a term of years." There's kindness for you! There's generosity! And we will make a bet that whichever one of the gifted beings wrote that astounding sentence, not a flicker of a smile crossed his (or her) solemn face.

But the plan of inviting the wicked owners to extinguish each other's private ownership is not enough, and on the next page our amiable prophets promise us that "beyond this the Death Duties would rise very steeply to nearly 100 per cent." No doubt they would, and in the second generation, for all the kind words uttered presently by the couple about "this continuous increase of private property in individual ownership," there would be nothing to leave and no death duties to collect. However, Mr and Mrs Webb, being wholly devoid of humour, as we have said, being blind and deaf to the amenities of life, finding dissipation in a municipal council and hilarious excitement in a board of guardians, go blithely on in their absurd dogmatic way. On one page they ask with an exquisite pomposity what will become of the country houses of England. "Some of the largest of them," we are told gravely, "will doubtless be maintained as convalescent homes in connection with the Local Health Authorities." "Doubtless" is an admirable stroke, and it is evident that these two fanatics admit no abatement of their pride. "But," thus they go on, "for the most part we look to see these pleasant residences becoming, under various forms of voluntary associations, the holiday homes and recreation grounds of the urban toilers by hand or brain." Oh dear!

oh dear! Doesn't it ever occur to our two pedants that "residences" are pleasant only because they have been converted into homes by those who loved them and cared for them? When the 22,000 country houses have been converted into 22,000 jails by dull unimaginative socialists, they will have utterly lost their value and their meaning. They have in the past, in spite of Mr and Mrs Webb's ignorance of life, been a centre of English happiness and prosperity, and they who have lived in them have done far better voluntary service to the people about them than ever could be done by the brutal cast-iron system dreamed of as progress by fanatics. And if the 22,000 country houses are to be annexed by fusty boards and stuffy associations, why not the costly villas and the large houses in town? We gather from their preface that Sidney and Beatrice Webb "reside," as they would say, at 41 Grosvenor Road. If country houses are given up, why should Grosvenor Road escape? It would serve excellently to shelter such "rural toilers by hand or brain" as wished to spend a week in the theatres and picture palaces of London. Are they ready for the sacrifice which they would impose upon others, or is the proposed new system of plunder to be used only against those who do not accept the untried, untested dogmas of Socialism?

The argument of Mr and Mrs Webb is based upon a series of the craziest assumptions. They assume, of course, that democracy is the only possible form of government. They assume it in the face of all recorded history, and in opposition to the soundest political philosophy. The only certain truths that can be set down about democracy are that they are transient and corrupt. Nor do we believe that under Socialism the democracy would be so pure even as it is to-day, when there are still some few checks of decency to control its passions. These checks Socialism will remove, and under its vile despotism we shall arrive at the state described by Aristotle, "when the people, who is now a monarch, and no longer under the control of law, seeks to exercise monarchical sway, and grows into a despot; the flatterer is held in honour; this sort of democracy being relatively to other democracies what tyranny is to other forms of monarchy." That is whither Mr and Mrs Webb would carry us if they could. Happily they must travel a very long way before they extinguish our liberty, and it is reassuring to remember that in the end pedantry always fails in a conflict with courage and righteousness.

Another vain assumption, of which Mr and Mrs Webb are guilty, is that the nationalisation of industry is a worthy and profitable scheme. Here also the experience of the world is against them, and they heed it not. In their vanity they make no attempt to prove their point. They are content to take it for granted. And yet it should be evident

to them that, wherever the State has taken charge of an industry, industry has instantly withered. Without the very proper impetus of personal success and private property men will not work with all their zest. Will men of business bring their brains to the State, will inventors devote their lives to their work as cheerfully if they are prisoners or bureaucrats, who are permitted on good conduct to "enjoy" an associated holiday in somebody else's stolen country house, as they would if they were free men, free to come and go as they pleased and to make what profit they could out of hand or brain? We need only good temper and industry, and the Webbs (Mr and Mrs) offer us a dull dogma, and the certainty of being robbed if we have been prudent and thrifty. We don't like the security. And when next the pedants paint us a Utopia, they must have a keener intelligence, a wider understanding of men and women than have fallen to the lot of the sad couple which now aspires to reform the world.

Their greatest strokes of humour may be found in the chapters devoted to sketching a new form of national government. By a noble act of condescension Mr and Mrs Webb have consented to keep the King upon the throne. Aren't they forbearing? King Sidney or Queen Beatrice would sound well enough, wouldn't it? And they refrain. But the King will keep his place only upon certain conditions. "Unless 'the Court' can acquire better manners"—such is the ultimatum—"and a new sense of social values, it may be expected that the institution of monarchy, whatever its political advantages, will become unpopular, and in that case it might very quickly disappear." The Court, however, need not despair. No doubt Mr and Mrs Webb would consent to mend its manners for it in a few easy lessons, and surely none is so competent to impart a new sense of social values as these two eminent moralists. The King, then, by the kind permission of our two rulers, may for the present remain upon the throne, and the British Commonwealth of Nations will not yet be dissolved. There the conservatism of the despots ends. The Second Chamber is given short shrift. "There is, of course," these are the winged words, "in the Socialist Commonwealth no place for the House of Lords, which will simply cease to exist as a part of the Legislature." There is a quiet confidence in the word "will," which shows that Mr and Mrs Webb mean business. Perhaps if their active lives had permitted them to ponder more deeply on the past, they might have discovered that there is little chance for the Throne to survive in a government consisting only of itself and a House of Commons. But the word has been spoken: the House of Lords is a misfit. To its shame be it said, it controls its own environment. Worse still, it educates its children as it chooses, and this, as any

good Socialist will tell you, is a direct attack upon the Socialists' liberty to make other men slaves. So it must go, and make way for two Houses of Commons, as though one were not enough, designed especially by Mr and Mrs Webb to keep the Socialist Commonwealth alive and alert. One is to be called the Political Parliament, and the other is to be called the Social Parliament. And since there is no possible chance of their coming into being, it is hardly worth while to consider their functions. Meanwhile, we can only pay a tribute to Mr and Mrs Webb's momentary moderation. Had they planned a dozen parliaments we should not have been surprised, for they have no interest in anything save in public bodies. The rest, no doubt, will come in time, and it is fortunate that there are two Webbs, for as it is essential that one or other of them should dominate all our deliberations, they will be able to divide the long hours of duty between them.

The book of Mr and Mrs Webb tells us a vast deal about the Webbs, and nothing that is worth reading about the British Constitution. These two sad personages seem to be confident that they can pit themselves successfully against the traditions of a thousand years. Of course they cannot. England is an old country, which has grown slowly to its present stature. And slow growth ensures conservatism. Indeed, our great salvation lies to-day, as it has always lain, in our power of reaction. We have reached the very depth of folly, and we shall now begin, in good heart, the ripened journey. The past, however, means nothing to those who, like Mr and Mrs Webb, are condemned to live and to think in a vacuum. They fondly believe that, detached from all that has been, they can sit down and concoct a constitution as a child would put together a jig-saw puzzle. It would be a pathetic situation if Mr and Mrs Webb ever once showed the smallest sympathy with those who do not agree with them. It is merely comedy, when we find two municipal councillors discussing men and women as though they were made of stone. Nevertheless, despite their lamentable lack of humour, we have found a certain pleasure in reading Mr and Mrs Webb's dreary book, which is a confession of failure. We know that their over-confident prophecy will never come true, that the paradise of functionaries, of which they dream, will never be a reality. Englishmen love freedom, they love humour, they love amenity, they love justice, and they will never submit to live in a country from which these virtues are excluded; they will never endure the cruellest of all tyrannies, the tyranny of the pedant who applies the thumb-screw in the sacred name of the People.

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